

THOMAS COUNTY Herald

Your Source Of News In The Sandhills

THOMAS COUNTY, THEDFORD, NEBRASKA 69166 (USPS 596-550) THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 2019 NO. 47

Severe One-Vehicle Rollover Accident Near Dunning Sends Four To The Hospital

A one-vehicle rollover accident on Memorial Day sent four to the hospital, three with critical injuries.

According to the Nebraska State Patrol, on Monday, May 27 at approximately 11:15 AM, a 2002 Honda was traveling westbound on US Highway 91 at mile marker four east of Dunning when the driver, 28 year

old Brooke Bennet from Green Valley, Arizona, lost control of the vehicle. The Honda left the roadway on the right side of the highway rolling multiple times which also ejected three juveniles, ages 7, 9, and 11, from the vehicle.

Two of the juveniles were taken by medical helicopter in critical condition to a Kearney hospital, while Bennet was

taken by medical helicopter to a North Platte hospital also in critical condition. The third juvenile was taken by ambulance to a North Platte hospital with injuries.

No fatalities have been reported. Alcohol is suspected in the cause of the accident.

The accident is under investigation by the Nebraska State Patrol.

Thomas County Library's Summer Reading Program Starts July 2



Youth of the community are invited to attend the 2019 Thomas County Library's Summer Reading Program. Many fun programs and events are planned for children ages 4 to 13.

This summer's theme is: A Universe of Stories! The programs are free and open to all children.

The reading program will be held on the following Tuesday's in July: the 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd. There will be three different age groups and times.

• Preschool age children will be from 1:30 - 2:00 p.m.

• Kindergarten through third grade will be from 2:30 - 3:15 p.m.

• Fourth through sixth grades will be from 3:45 - 4:30 p.m.

Please send your child at the appointed time and please come get them when their time is up so we can work with the next group. As the time gets closer more information will be available on the Thomas County Library Facebook page and

posters around town. If you have any questions feel free to call the library at 308-645-2237.

Please contact Kim Mills, Thomas County Library Director, if your child will be attending the summer reading program so adequate supplies for everyone are available.

The last day (July 23rd) we will be having some very special visitors all age groups are asked to be at the library at 1:15 p.m. that day.

Have a GREAT summer!

Dunning Public Library Holding Summer Reading Program



"Where Can Reading Take You?" is the theme of the Dunning Public Library Summer Reading Program. The reading program will take place on Tuesday mornings from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. beginning June 11 and continuing for five weeks through July 9.

The Dunning Public Library, located in Sandhills High School at Dunning is hosting the event and is inviting children who will be entering kindergarten through the fifth grades.

Youth will be able to win prizes and have a lot of fun.

The schedule of activities are:

June 11: Reading Can Take You...To Outer Space! Listen to an astronaut aboard the space station read a story. Hunt for constellations you can see in the night sky.

June 18: Reading Can Take You...Around the World. Cookbooks are books, too! We'll be reading recipes to whip up some snacks from different countries.

June 25: Reading Can Take You...Back in Time. Costume Contest! Dress up like a character who lived long ago—Laura Ingalls, an American Girl, George Washington, an Egyptian pharaoh...who will you choose?

July 2: Reading Can Take You...To the Sea. Read a story and create a diorama of life under the ocean. These dioramas may be entered in the county fair!

July 9: Reading Can Take You...On Stage! Learn card tricks, have your face painted, perform a song or poem on stage. We'll celebrate good books and a fun summer as we wrap up the reading program!

Come for one day or for all five.

Contact Kristin Ganoung at 308-535-2212 or kristin.ganoung@gmail.com if you have any questions. See you there!

MARCIA HORA

Amy Allen, former Stapleton Village clerk-treasurer, is facing three counts after an arrest was made at 6:50 p.m., Wednesday, May 29.

Allen turned herself in at the Logan County Sheriff's office in Stapleton, after an arrest warrant was issued following an investigation by the Nebraska State Patrol and an attestation report completed by the Nebraska State Auditor.

Allen posted ten percent of a \$25,000.00 bond and she was released after being taken to the Custer County jail where she was booked and charged with theft/deception of \$5,000 plus, abuse of public records, and public official/misuse of property/funds.

The first charge is a Class IIA felony which carries a minimum of 0-20 years imprisonment. The other two charges are misdemeanors, each carrying up to six months in jail or a fine of up to \$1,000, or both.

Allen resigned her position with the village in August of 2018 to take a position as office clerk in the Logan County Clerk's office. She had worked as village clerk for 10 years.

The following information was taken from the Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts website and is public information. It may be found at www.auditors.nebraska.gov

On January 22, 2019, the APA received a letter from a concerned citizen alleging the mishandling of public funds by Ms. Allen during her tenure as the former clerk/treasurer. Specifically, the complaint alleged the following:

"From what I have heard it that the former clerk-treasurer (Amy Allen) has signed a paper with the Village of Stapleton Board agreeing to repay the village \$15,000.00 in exchange

for no charges being filed against her. The main concern that I have is that Amy Allen is now employed for Logan County and is working in the clerk's office."

On February 28, 2019, the APA contacted the Village regarding that allegation. In response, the APA received a copy of the Settlement Agreement between the Village and Ms. Allen.

During September 2018, discrepancies were discovered with Village utility customer accounts, as amounts received by the previous clerk had been applied to different customers.

During October and November, 2018, MJK CPA conducted an analysis to determine how much money appeared to have been misappropriated by Ms. Allen.

The Village board was presented a summary of Ms. Kramer's analysis at the Village Board's meeting, alleging the theft of Village funds by Ms. Allen. The board moved to go into executive session at that meeting to discuss the findings and came out of executive session with no action taken.

Chairman Bryan Rooney and vice chairman Dan Beckius sought legal advice from village attorney, Mike Borders.

Chairman Rooney and vice chairman Beckius and Ms. Kramer met with Ms. Allen on January 2, 2019. They provided her with a copy of an agreement drawn up by the Village attorney, asking her to repay \$15,000 over time. The agreement was signed by Ms. Allen and Chairman Rooney.

The board of trustees voted to accept Allen's restitution at the February 21, 2019 meeting.

The APA traveled to the Village on April 24-25 and obtained various financial documents, including invoices, billings, receipt books, and other supporting Village records. The

APA also received bank statements provided in support of the Village's denied audit waiver request.

Allen provided a written statement to the Nebraska State Patrol, admitting her misappropriation of Village funds. During an interview she admitted to deleting from the Village's accounting system the invoices of customers who paid fees with cash. The State Trooper investigating the allegations reported to the APA that Allen claimed she did not take any monies from customers paying with a check. Allen's practice was to delete the invoice in relationship to the customer whom was paying with cash only.

The APA ran a QuickBooks voided-deleted transactions summary report from September 1, 2015, to the present and observed over 800 deleted customer transactions. The report totaled \$38,290.88 of deleted transactions, but the clerk may not have taken cash for every deleted invoice; however, based on the deleted transaction report, it appears likely that she took well over the \$15,000 agreed upon.

The APA found only one receipt book dating back to March 2018.

Other findings in the auditor's report were a number of issues with the Village's internal control processes, village employees were not required to pay utility fees while working for the Village, and those amounts were not taxed as a fringe benefit; the Village's utility billing issues included not updating relevant ordinances, not billing for water usage, and not ensuring that all customers were properly billed for services received; there were several issues with the Village's payroll processes; and the Village's handling of claims

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MPCC to unveil 2019 raffle car



COURTESY

The 2019 Mid-Plains Community College raffle car will be officially revealed to the public during NEBRASKAland Days. The 1969 Ford Mustang Convertible will be unveiled at 9 a.m. during the Antique Car Display in Memorial Park June 14.

About the car

The Mustang is the 15th raffle car produced by

MPCC's Transportation Division. It was restored by students in MPCC's Automotive Technology and Auto Body Technology programs.

The car came from Stuart, Neb. The students disassembled it - essentially reducing it down to a shell. They then sandblasted the body and frame to bare metal.

From there, they embarked on the long and challenging process of transforming the vehicle into a work of art. The project required them to study traditional engineering and technology. "The interior is original in intent," said Don Wil-

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• Thomas Co. Planning Commission Public Notice

• Thomas Co. Commissioners Public Notice
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Obituary

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