

THOMAS COUNTY Herald

Your Source Of News In The Sandhills

THOMAS COUNTY, THEDFORD, NEBRASKA 69166

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2020

NO. 24

Wheeler Co. Commissioners pass zoning to ban wind energy projects

Senator Tom Brewer
43rd District

A few weeks back we received word from the Wheeler County Commissioners that they had unanimously passed a county zoning regulation that entirely bans industrial wind energy projects in that county.

First of all, I want to say how proud of them I am. It takes courage for elected representatives to stand up to the big wind companies. Furthermore, this is more clear and convincing evidence that Nebraska's state law works just fine. Chapter 23 of the revised statutes is crystal clear in the power it gives counties, and I am glad it does.

I read in the Norfolk paper recently that there is a lot of "myth and misinformation" about wind energy. The article was forwarded to me by one of wind energy's strongest lobbyists in Nebraska. He argued that only a poorly informed "vocal minor-

ity" opposes wind energy, and the vast majority of citizens support it. Clearly this man hasn't spent a lot of time talking to people in my legislative district. Whenever someone directs the argument away from the numerous problems created by wind energy, to instead a discussion about the relative size and importance of the opposition, it's easy to see where that train of thought is headed.

Attacking the opposition as insignificant is the tired old tactic of the wind lobby who think their right to get a fat check from the wind company is more important than how their neighbors may feel about being forced to live next to these things. Attacking your neighbors as insignificant cranks without a legitimate argument is how wind energy does its greatest damage to Nebraska: they tear the fabric of the community apart. Those lucky few who make impressive amounts of money, and

everyone else who is forced to be neighbors to the scourge of industrial wind energy. They are more than happy to make the wind energy argument about two coyotes and a fat turkey discussing what to have for supper. They've been successful at this approach for many years. Thankfully, counties in Nebraska and around the country are pushing back. Gage County recently passed a one-mile setback rule between homes and turbines. Stanton County banned wind turbine development in 2017. Dakota County is debating a moratorium on wind energy. My research has found over eighty counties and parishes around the United States that have either banned wind energy or restricted it in some way, and the list is growing rapidly.

Wind energy isn't good for the environment. It slaughters wildlife and makes some people sick. It isn't free. It doesn't lower your electric bill.

The tax rate they pay hasn't changed in over a decade. Wind facilities are bought and sold numerous times over the life of a project often leaving the county holding the bag for their decommissioning. We don't need the electricity in Nebraska. We have enough surplus generation to power a second city of Lincoln.

County government in Nebraska has the power to decide whether or not wind energy can be built in the county. The more local government is, the better it is.

Please contact my office with any comments, questions, or concerns. Email me at tbrewer@leg.ne.gov, mail a letter to Sen. Tom Brewer, Room #1101, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509, or call us at (402) 471-2628.

Clothing Closet Provides Community Support



The Clothing Closet located at the First Christian Church, 817 J. St., in Burwell continues to offer shoppers in many counties the opportunity to get clothing, shoes, coats, bedding, blankets, children's clothing and toys, and other miscellaneous items during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Clothing Closet served over 200 family members in October from seven counties and Texas. Currently, there is a special Christmas section available for shoppers.

The Clothing Closet is open to shoppers every Friday afternoon from 1:00-5:00 for shopper's convenience. Mask wearing and social distancing is required. Please have only one family member

shop for the rest of the family to limit the number of shoppers at one time. And if you have been ill or are feeling ill please DO NOT come and shop. Let's all try and do our part to ensure the safety of those around us and to keep the doors open.

Donations to the Clothing Closet are welcome and can be dropped off at the Loup Rivers Scenic Byway Interpretive Center in Burwell. For additional details call Sonja at 308-750-7085.

Come visit the Clothing Closet. You will find everything from brand new to vintage, from purses to boots, and children's toys and baby equipment. Everyone is welcome!!

CDC updates quarantine guidelines; new DHM

Governor Pete Ricketts held a press conference at the State Capitol on Friday, December 4, to provide an update on the State's coronavirus pandemic response. The Governor announced that the State of Nebraska has issued new Directed Health Measures (DHMs) to align with CDC recommendations to shorten the length of quarantine required for persons who've had close contact exposure to the coronavirus. The updated DHMs took effect December 3, 2020 at 5:00 PM.

Gov. Ricketts also announced new guidance for long-term care (LTC) facilities to designate "essential caregivers" for their residents. These caregivers may be family members, friends, or volunteers who provided regular support to the resident before the pan-

demic. By recognizing them as essential caregivers, LTC facilities can allow these folks to have more regular interactions assisting residents during this time of enhanced restrictions.

Jim Engelbart, President of the Nebraska Craft Brewers Guild, took part in the press conference to talk about the challenges facing Nebraska's breweries during the pandemic. He shared ways Nebraskans can continue to support the restaurants, bars, and breweries in their community. The CDC has updated its quarantine guidelines, and Nebraska has revised DHMs to reflect these changes.

The new DHMs took effect statewide at 5:00 PM on December 3, 2020.

Quarantine may discontinue without testing under the following con-

ditions:
At least ten (10) days have passed since close contact exposure AND

No coronavirus symptoms have developed and the person self-monitors for symptoms and wears a facial covering through day 14 since the last close contact

Quarantine may discontinue with testing under the following conditions:
At least seven (7) days have passed since close contact exposure, no coronavirus symptoms have developed AND

Results of a diagnostic specimen test (molecular or antigen) is negative that was collected no earlier than five (5) days since last close contact exposure AND

The person self-monitors for symptoms and wears a facial covering through day 14 since the last close contact

A Gift of Ag Safety

UNMC, Central States Center
for Ag Safety & Health

Struggling to find a valuable gift for that farmer on your list? Don't overlook the options for boosting safety practices with a gift such as high-quality work gloves, earmuffs to help prevent hearing damage or a warm chore coat.

If budgets allow, retrofitting a tractor with a Roll Over Protective Structure (ROPS) is a gift that can provide a lifetime of safety. Or maybe the tractor's seatbelt needs to be replaced.

For farmers who spend a lot of time in the farm shop, it may be beneficial to update electrical tools or appliances. Small gift items that are useful in the shop include extension cords, storage bins, and hand tools. Perhaps

new personal protective equipment, such as safety glasses or welding aprons, will be useful. A new fire extinguisher or first aid kit may also be valuable additions to a farm shop.

Larger shop items that help improve safety in the farm shop include storage cabinets, upgraded lighting systems, a welding table and/or accessories. Shelving, new railings or upgrades to stairs, loft, etc. may also improve farm shop safety.

Five types of eye protection are available for agricultural use. They include basic safety glasses, prescription safety glasses, goggles, face shields and welding helmets. Prescription safety glasses are available in both bifocals and tinted lenses. Tinting is especially helpful when work includes bright light flashes.

Goggles provide protec-

tion from all angles, fitting snugly around the eyes. They are especially useful when using a chainsaw and for grinding or riveting jobs. They generally fit over prescription glasses and come with anti-fog features.

When using face shields, they must be worn in conjunction with either glasses or goggles. Face shields are helpful to protect users from heat, glare and flying objects. Welding helmets protect against damage to eyes as well as deflecting sparks, rays and airborne particles.

On the farm, work boots must withstand daily wear and tear and many different types of weather conditions. Boots that are 100% leather may feature

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Senator Fischer announces local virtual office hours

U.S. Senator Deb Fischer (R-Neb.) announced that her staff is hosting virtual local office hours for constituents in Grant, Hooker, and Thomas counties on Wednesday, December 16, 2020. These office hours serve as a convenient opportunity for constituents to speak directly with Senator Fischer's staff to receive help

with casework and other issues at the federal level. Due to COVID-19, in-person local office hours are not taking place.

Nebraskans should make an appointment for virtual office hours in advance. Brandi McCaslin, Senator Fischer's greater Nebraska director of constituent services, will be available to speak with

constituents from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. MT by video or telephone sessions. Please email Senator Fischer's office at outreach@fischer.senate.gov to make an appointment.

Contact Senator Fischer's Scottsbluff office at 308-630-2329 with any questions.

Stakeholders Need To Help Make Drought Mitigation Plan

The Upper Loup Natural Resources District is undertaking an effort to develop a Drought Mitigation Plan and would like to invite any interested parties to participate as a stakeholder. This plan will: refine a collective understanding of drought risk and vulnerabilities, identify and prioritize mitigation efforts, and define drought response measures that will be utilized during fu-

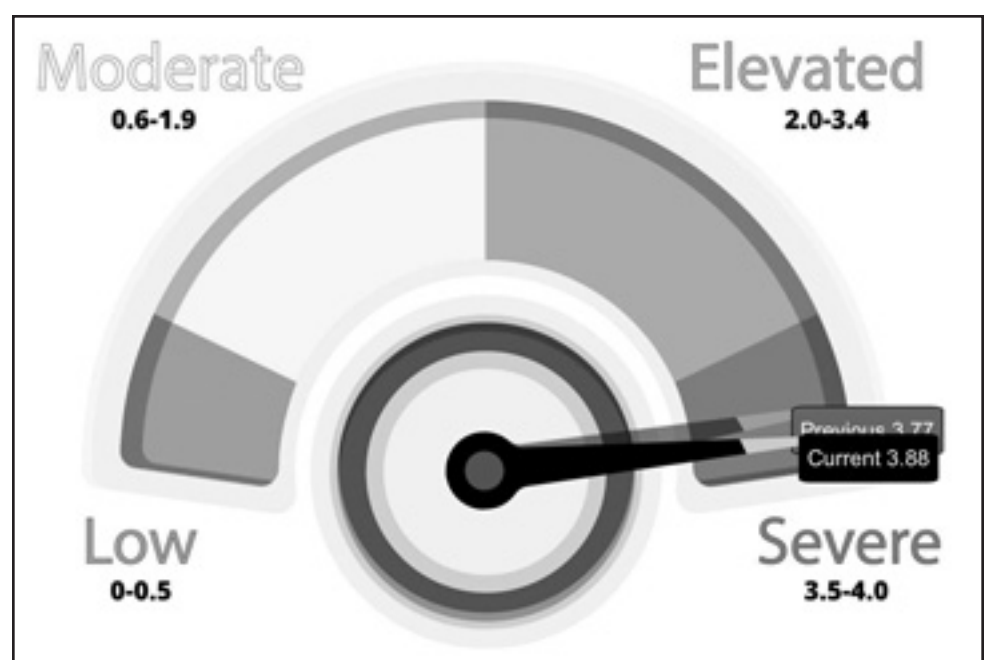
ture drought events. The overarching goal is to develop a sound operational drought response framework and improve critical water supplies throughout the District during periods of drought.

As a part of this planning process, the NRD is creating a stakeholder group that will help guide this effort. Stakeholders will be asked to review materials periodically and attend a couple proj-

ect meetings. Your commitment in fulfilling this important role will be greatly appreciated and will ensure a successful plan.

Given the current uncertainties regarding COVID-19, we are planning to wait to conduct meetings until 2021. If you are interested in joining this planning effort or have questions, please contact me at abaum@upperloup-nrd.org or 308-645-2250.

Risk Dial Creeps Up



The risk dial moved from a 3.77 up to a 3.88 this week, which remains in the severe risk level. There were changes in the following variables that contributed to movement in the dial:

- We had an increase in the following:
 - Measure ID R0: Positivity Rate (Overall)
 - Measure ID R5: ICU Availability
 - Measure ID R6: Ventilator Availability
- We had a decrease in the

following:

- Measure ID R9: Average Testing Turnaround Time

The COVID-19 Risk Dial contains recommended guidance to help prevent and control the spread of COVID-19.

While in the Severe Risk category, physical distance of 6 feet or greater, wearing face coverings when outside the home, frequent handwashing (or use of hand sanitizer), staying home if you are

having flu-like or COVID-like symptoms, disinfecting high touch surfaces, and having at-risk and vulnerable people remain home are recommended as the greatest tools in reducing the spread of COVID-19. For more information on recommendations for the various risk categories of the WCDHD Community Risk Dial, please visit the

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