

# THOMAS COUNTY Herald

Your Source Of News In The Sandhills

THOMAS COUNTY, THEDFORD, NEBRASKA 69166

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2021

NO. 11

## Local 4-H'ers Place At State Fair

Local 4-H'ers did a great job of representing Blaine and Thomas Counties at the 2021 Nebraska State Fair. Static 4-H exhibits were judged on 4-H Entry Day, August 25th and were displayed until Labor Day, September 6th in the 4-H Exhibit Building.

Ribbon placings for Blaine County 4-H Static Exhibits are:

Augusta Schneidereit-Blue, 4H Communications & Expressive Arts - 4H Photography Unit II - Creative Composition Display or Print; Blue, 4H Communications & Expressive Arts - 4H Photography Unit II - Expression Through Color Display or Print; Blue, 4H Plants - 4H Horticulture - Carrots

Henrietta Schneidereit-Purple, 4H Consumer & Family Science - 4H Design Decision - Accessory-Original Made from Glass Zane Schneidereit-Blue, 4H Consumer & Family Science - 4H Design Decision - Accessory-Original Made from Ceramic or Tile; Red, 4H Plants - 4H Floriculture - Desert Garden

Ribbon placings for Thomas County 4-H Static Exhibits are:

Dominic Rowse-Smith-Blue, 4H Consumer & Family Science - 4H STEAM Clothing: Beyond The Needle - Textile Arts Garment or Accessory Lola Rowse-Smith-Red, 4H Healthy Lifestyle Education - 4H Cooking 401 - Double Crust Fruit Pie

## WRC To Hold Fund Raiser

Women's Resource Center will hold its 22nd annual fundraising celebration, Thursday, September 16, 2021. This is one of two major fundraisers for the pro-life ministry of the Women's Resource Center.

The theme of this year's event is "United for LIFE." The celebration will take place at the North Platte Berean Church with a complementary meal catered by Ole's Big Game Steakhouse in Paxton. Those attending will hear center updates and a challenging message from guest speaker, Mark Lee Dickson. The event is an opportunity to raise awareness and funds for the WRC.

The WRC does not receive federal or state funding for the services provided, therefore, they rely on individuals, churches, and businesses that believe in the work they do to prayerfully give to fund this life-affirming ministry. This year's banquet will feature a special announcement and celebration.

The Women's Resource Center serves North Platte and the surrounding communities in Lincoln County and West Central Nebraska. Free services include pregnancy testing, information on abortion procedures and pregnancy options, limited ultrasound, abortion counseling, and meeting material needs.

## Investing In Our Greatest Resource

By: Governor Pete Ricketts

Over the past year, Nebraska's economy has been booming, creating more and more great opportunities here in the Good Life. We currently have the lowest unemployment rate in the nation at 2.5%. That equals our state's lowest rate ever and is less than half of the national unemployment rate of 5.4%. According to Local Area Unemployment Statistics from the Nebraska Department of Labor, 92 of our 93 counties have an unemployment rate at or below 2.7%. Statewide, our manufacturing employment is above pre-pandemic levels and has reached its highest point since the Great Recession (October 2008).

Job opportunities abound. The State's job site (NEworks.nebraska.gov) listed over 49,000 open positions on August 29th. WalletHub recently ranked Nebraska as the #2 state in the U.S. to find a job, and it named Lincoln and Omaha as the top two cities in the nation bouncing back the strongest from coronavirus. While this strong growth has led to plenty of opportunities, it also presents a challenge for businesses that are looking to grow. Companies are having difficulty hiring people to fill all of the jobs they're creating.

To address this, we're taking steps to help Nebraskans get the skills and education needed to take the great-paying jobs being created in our state. We're approaching this in a strategic way by building a talent pipeline to help prepare students for high-wage, high-demand careers here in Nebraska. Our pipeline starts in middle school with the Developing Youth Talent Initiative (DYTI), which familiarizes kids with jobs in fields like engineering or manufacturing. This summer, we awarded our latest round of DYTI grants to Behlen Manufacturing Company in Columbus and Great Plains Health in North Platte.

After participating in DYTI, students can take part in a career academy at the high school level. These academies provide hands-on learning experiences, job shadowing, and mentoring to further prepare students for professional life. High school graduates can then apply for Nebraska Career Scholarships. These scholarships help offset tuition for college students in fields of study, such as engineering and IT, where there's a big need for skilled professionals. Earlier this year, I worked with the Legislature to expand the Career Scholarship program to at least 2,110 by 2025.

In addition to these programs, we're partnering with local companies to offer a variety of apprenticeships to students—both in high school and college. Since January 2020, the number of Registered Apprenticeships has grown by 14 percent with 1,511 new appren-

tices enrolled. These apprenticeships give students the opportunity to gain on-the-job skills, while simultaneously earning income and coursework credits. Earlier this month, I joined CLAAS for the grand opening of their innovative new training academy, which offers German-style apprenticeships in west Omaha. It's part of the Industry Consortium for Advanced Technical Training (ICATT) program created by the German American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest. Based on the German dual-education philosophy, ICATT apprentices gain valuable workplace knowledge while studying for industry certifications and an associate degree in their chosen field.

Some companies are blending a variety of strategies to recruit the next generation of Nebraskans to work for them. Reinke Manufacturing in Deshler is a great example of a Nebraska business that has proactively invested locally to build its workforce. A two-time DYTI award recipient, Reinke has used the grants to educate students on coding and robotics. Before working with DYTI, Reinke launched a welding program at Deshler High School and donated the equipment used to train students over a decade ago. The manufacturer has also funded scholarships at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NTCA) and contributed a GPS-equipped center pivot for use in NTCA's field laboratory. This long-term engagement with area schools is exactly what's needed for companies to meet their demand for talent.

As we work to recruit and retain the talent businesses need to grow, we are also pursuing strategies beyond the classroom. Military service members have valuable skills they learned while on active duty, and they add immense value to our businesses and nonprofits as they pursue a new career in civilian life. In recent years, we've taken a number of steps to make Nebraska a more attractive home for them and for their families. This year, I successfully worked with the Legislature to pass LB 587, which provides a 100% tax exemption on military retirement benefits. In April, we announced the Veterans' SkillBridge. Overseen by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, the program creates connections between Nebraska employers and military members during their final 180 days of service, giving participants a chance to explore the best fit for their specific talents and interests after transitioning out of military service. This spring, we also launched the Military Spouse Transition Program to help military spouses moving to Nebraska identify job opportunities in state government. Additionally, I signed legislation this year to make it quicker and easier for mil-

## 2021 Legacy Run To Make Stop In Thedford

The Nebraska American Legion Riders (ALR) are hosting the Legacy Run Across Nebraska to raise scholarship funds for the National American Legion Legacy Fund.

The ride begins September 10, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. at the Benson American Legion Post, #112, 8904 Military Road, Omaha, NE and concludes at the Gering American Legion Post #36, Gering, NE on September 11, 2021.

Stops include, the Columbus American Legion Post #84, the Grand Island American Legion Post #53, the Broken Bow American Legion Post #126, Thedford (TBD), Alliance (Nebraska Veterans cemetery), and finishing at the Gering American Legion Post #36.

All riders and anyone wishing to following in



their vehicles are welcome. Donating to the American Legion Legacy Fund is not a prerequisite to participate in this run. Registration will be at 9:00 a.m. each day. Participants must sign a waiver prior to clutches out at 10:00 a.m.

Participants may join the Legacy Run at any point along the way. For start and stop specifics, please contact John Arias, Nebraska ALR Liaison at

the contact information above.

All Donations are welcome and can be made at: [www.legion.org/riders/sc](http://www.legion.org/riders/sc) scholarship.

Please make check payable to the American Legion Legacy Fund and they will be presented to the Department Commander on behalf of the Nebraska American Legion Riders.

The American Legion wants to ensure higher

education is a possibility for children whose parents lost their lives while serving our country. Beginning with the 2017 award year, The American Legion expanded the scholarship to include children of VA-rated, post-9/11 veterans with a combined disability rating of 50 percent or higher. The American Legion and the Legion Riders offer support through the Legacy Scholarship Fund.

"For the Cause, Not the Applause" captures in words, voices, numbers and memories the annual motorcycle ride that has raised more than \$11 million since 2006 to provide scholarship money to the children of U.S. military personnel who died or became over 50% disabled on active duty since 2001. ([legion.org](http://legion.org))

## Correction Made On School Budget

Blake Dahlberg, Thedford Public Schools Superintendent

The Thedford Board of Education conducted their 2021-2022 Budget and Tax Levy Hearing on Monday, August 30th. When going through the information, it came to my attention that the hearing notice that was posted in the paper had an error on it. The levies for the General Fund and QCPUF were correct, but the total levy only re-

flected the general fund total. This error has been corrected on the worksheets that we receive from the state and a new form is being published in this edition of the paper. The Board will meet on Monday, September 13th at 7:00 p.m. in regular session. On the agenda will be the approval of the Budget and Tax Levy for the 2021-2022 school year.

A couple of quick highlights of the budget this year include the fact that we reduced our overall

tax request by \$190,000. For the first time since the 2014-2015 school year, our overall tax request is under \$2,000,000. Our levy is moving from \$0.736 to \$0.628 and we have a very healthy fund balance. Our budget did increase this year, but the overall increase is due to the ESSR II and III funds that we have been allocated in response to the pandemic, which does not affect our tax request. If you remove the planned ESSR expenses

from our budget, we actually reduced our budget from last year by about \$30,000.

Again, we will be meeting on September 13th at 7:00 p.m. in the high school to approve the budget and levy request for this year. We encourage anyone with questions, thoughts, concerns, or input to contact Mr. Dahlberg before the meeting, or to attend the meeting and provide input during the open forum time!

## Lenders Can Now Apply For New Heirs Property Relending Program

Intermediary lenders can now apply for loans through the new Heirs' Property Relending Program (HPRP). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting applications today through October 29, 2021, and cooperatives, credit unions and nonprofit organizations are encouraged to apply for these competitive loans, which ultimately will help agricultural producers and landowners resolve heirs' land ownership and suc-

cession issues.

"Heirs' property issues have long been a barrier for many producers and landowners to access USDA programs and services, and this relending program provides access to capital to help producers find a resolution to these issues," said Zach Ducheneaux, Administrator of USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). "USDA is committed to revising policies to be more equitable and removing barriers faced by heirs' property owners is part of that effort."

Through HPRP, FSA loans up to \$5 million at a 1 percent interest rate to eligible lenders. Then, those eligible lenders will reloan funds to heirs to help resolve title issues by financing the purchase or consolidation of property interests and financing costs associated with a succession plan.

How to Apply Intermediary lenders should apply by the October 29, 2021, deadline

using the HPRP application form (FSA-2637), which can be submitted to FSA by mail:

FSA Deputy Administrator for Farm Loan Programs

Loan Making Division STOP 0522 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.

Washington, DC 20250 Additionally, FSA will host a webinar on September 15 at 2 p.m. ET for

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