

LB 281 will fund new 4-H camp

MARCIA HORA

State Senator Mike Jacobson was in Thedford, Friday, February 3, to visit with constituents on his bill LB 281. The bill brought before the legislature by Senators Jacobson and Tom Brewer, deals specifically with providing funding for the reconstruction of the Halsey 4-H Camp.

Hearing for the bill was Wednesday, February 15, and area residents were on hand to testify and citizens were encouraged to submit written testimony.

The bill proposes the Nebraska Department of Economic Development provide grants to any non-profit organization holding a 501(c)(3) exemption for the purpose of building or renovating youth outdoor education camp facilities, including structures and infrastructure, with preference given to a facility damaged by man-made or natural disaster.

Grants would require a minimum of twenty-five percent match in private or other money from the applicant, and no awardee shall receive one or more grants totaling more than \$30 million. The proposed grant money would come from the state's general fund.

Highlights of Senator Jacobson's presentation at the Sandhills Corral included:

- The 4-H camp was a source of outside revenue for the surrounding communities for 60 years.



TERRI LICKING

- The 4-H camp was a multi-use facility used by more than 4-H campers and when locally managed had greater utilization. A replacement with fewer restrictions on use, managed more locally and built for year-round use would be an economic benefit to the surrounding communities.

- A facility built, managed and utilized more like the Lied Lodge in Nebraska City would be an economic benefit to a larger area of western Nebraska, drawing people to this "destination" from a larger area in all directions.

- A new facility should be built with a greater

focus on year-round recreational activities provided by its location on the Middle Loup River and in or adjacent to the Nebraska National Forest.

- A replacement facility should be owned and managed by an entity with a focus on creating a destination for families, organizations, etc. rather than singularly focused on a single entity such as 4-H.

- The replacement facility should be open to all types of users on a reservation basis, year-round and 24/7 operation.

- A replacement facility should provide long term, well paying local jobs when built with a year-round focus.

Local Working Group Meeting Planned

Local meetings open to individuals interested in setting natural resources goals for Nebraska.

A Local Working Group that provides advice on the priorities for many U.S. Department of Agriculture conservation programs will meet March 15, 2023, at the Upper Loup Natural Resources District Learning Center, Thedford, Nebraska.

The public is encouraged to attend and express their natural resource concerns. Ideas generated from the public will help the U.S. Department of Agriculture tailor their natural resource programs to meet the needs identified locally.

There is a Local Working Group in each Natural Resources District (NRD). Membership on the Local Working Group includes Federal, State, county,

Tribal or local government representatives according to Leah Carson, District Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) whose agency guides the Local Working Group.

"The Local Working Group recommends to the NRCS State Conservationist how conservation programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), or Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) would be used most effectively in their area. This recommendation can include special target areas, cost share rates on conservation pro-

grams, which conservation practices should have cost assistance, or how many dollars could be needed," said Leah Carson. This work group allows local input into how Federal dollars are spent, he said.

Typically, Nebraska NRCS obligates anywhere between \$45 million to over \$75 million dollars to farmers and ranchers statewide through NRCS conservation programs. These programs helped landowners and operators make natural resource improvements to their land, water, or wildlife. This funding was allocated according to the priorities set by the Local Working Group.

Sitz/Johnston Angus Hosts 50th Annual Bull Sale

Mike and Debra Sitz and Joel and Bethany Johnston hosted their 50th annual bull sale at the Burwell Livestock Market, on Monday, February 6, 2023. The day turned sunny and warm, being a welcome change from the frigid cold and piles of snow and ice that people had been contending with in the previous weeks. With the improvement of temperatures, cattlemen seemed in an optimistic mood.

For a century the Sitz family has been devoted to building a cowherd centered around functional and problem free Angus genetics, and coming from this cow herd was a very uniform set of



COURTESY

LeMoyné Dailey, Thedford, and Joel Johnston enjoy a visit at the Mike Sitz and Joel Johnston Bull Sale in Burwell.

bulls, with 87 head of Mike Sitz and Joel Johnston's coming two-year-old Angus bulls averaging \$6,468.

The high selling bull was Lot 24, MSAR Embla-

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Literacy project in Custer County

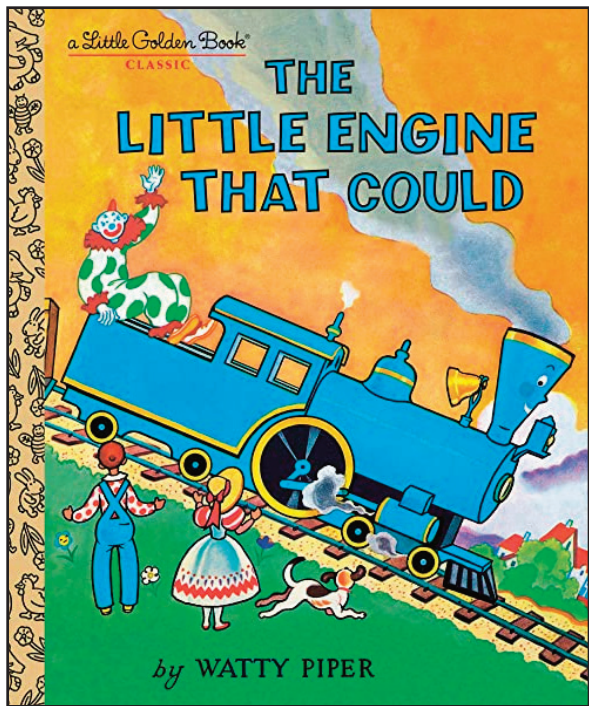
Imagine if every child received a book every month in his or her home for the first five years of life. Imagine the excitement those children would have in receiving those gifts. Now imagine that this will be a reality thanks to Central Nebraska Interact students.

Founded October 6, 2022, by five highly interested and motivated young people after attending RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Award camp the summer of 2022), they have recruited more than 20 members from across Custer County and jumped right in with several projects.

Central Nebraska Interact has raised money for the Halsey fire clean-up, wrote grants to clean up the Arnold Recreation Area pond with fountains, a county-wide dodgeball tournament, and raised money for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library project. These young people have a desire to help their fellow students and communities.

Interact is an off-shoot of Rotary and is a global network of volunteers who share a passion for enhancing communities and improving lives around the world. Interact clubs participate in an array of service projects that address community needs at home and abroad, from fighting disease and providing clean water to supporting education, growing local economics and promoting peace.

Interact brings together a group of young people



Over five million copies of *The Little Engine That Could* book have been sent in the U.S. and Canada and now will include Custer county kids.

from across Custer County who are dedicated to tackling local projects and challenges. Their work improves lives at both the local and international levels, from helping families in need in their own communities to working toward a polio-free world.

Central Nebraska Interact students are creating a "nest egg" of funds to draw from when Custer County parents begin to sign their children up. Their goal is to collect \$15,000.

For just \$25.00 per child, per year, kids will receive a hard-bound or heavy paperback book, titles from

well-known authors, tips for parents on what to talk about when they read the book to their child, and a mailing label showing the funding comes from Custer County.

To make a donation, you may send a check to Arnold Community Foundation, c/o Central NE Interact Club, 508 N. Walnut, Arnold, NE 69120. In the memo line write "Interact's Dolly Project."

Central Nebraska Interact students thank you in advance for donating to this worthy cause to help children learn the importance and value of reading.

Thedford Receives Recycling Grant

Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy Director Jim Macy announced on February 6, 2023 the award of \$7,733,191.25 in grants to support 140 projects across the state. These grants will help fund litter and waste reduction projects, recycling programs, and pay costs for scrap tire cleanups and collections for household hazardous waste, electronic waste, and pharmaceuticals.

"There were many outstanding applications submitted to NDEE this year," Macy said. "These grants will assist many important local efforts to promote litter and waste reduction and help handle the costs of proper disposal of many materials, such as household hazardous waste and scrap tires."

Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive funds are generated by a fee on solid waste disposed in landfills, an annual retail business sales fee, and a fee assessed on the sale of new tires. Grants are provided to local integrated waste management projects and can include recycling systems, household hazardous waste collections, and composting. For 2023, 26 projects totaling \$2,798,140 were funded under the Busi-

ness Fee and Disposal Fee categories.

Also included in the Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive program are Scrap Tire funds, which are generated from a \$1 fee on new tires purchased in Nebraska. In 2023, 68 grants totaling \$2,499,498.10 were awarded. These grants will fund 30 scrap tire cleanup events across Nebraska. Enough funding was awarded to cleanup up 6,775 tons of scrap tires. Funds will also be used to partially reimburse the cost of many products made from recycled scrap tires, such as artificial turf football, soccer, baseball and softball fields, athletic running tracks, and playground surfacing.

Litter Reduction and Recycling funds are generated from a fee charged to certain manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers of products that commonly contribute to litter. The program has provided grants annually since 1979. In 2023, 46 litter grants totaling \$2,435,553.15 were awarded in the public education, cleanup, and recycling categories. Public education programs educate citizens on litter reduction and recycling through a variety of school and community ac-

tivities. Cleanup grants provide funding for Nebraska residents of all ages who pick up litter and debris along Nebraska's highways, waterways, recreation lands, urban areas, and other public use areas within the state. Not only are the public areas improved through the removal of litter, but much of the material collected is also recycled.

Recycling programs provide an alternative to the disposal of solid waste in Nebraska's landfills. Priority is given to programs that promote markets for recycled materials or purchasing products made from recycled materials.

Grant applications for 2024 will be available in early July 2023.

Please check our website or contact ndeq.waste-grants@nebraska.gov for more information.

The Upper Loup Natural Resources District in Thedford received a Recycling Grant from the Litter Reduction & Recycling Fund in the amount of \$25,200.00

The funds will go towards contractual costs for transporting recycling trailers and collection totes from collection locations to ULNRD recycling for processing and then to Western Resources group in Ogallala.