

New Siren Installed At Thedford Fire Hall

A new fire and several weather warning siren has been installed in Thedford. The new Federal Signal Siren will nearly double the audible notification area of a previous obsolete system. Furthermore, the siren will have distinct tones for fire or severe weather significantly improving public safety. The system will be activated by Region 26 to alert firefighters of emergencies to include wildfires, structure fires, search and rescue operations, and motor vehicle accidents. This important alert will lead to more efficient and effective reaction by area first responders. Additionally, the severe weather tone will be activated at the request of the National Weather Service or by local trained weather spotters from Thedford Fire & Rescue and the Thomas County Sheriff's Office. Early warning systems are proven to reduce loss of life and injury during severe weather events such as tornadoes.

The siren will be tested as part of the upcoming statewide Tornado Siren Test on March 29, 2023 between 10:00-10:30 a.m. CT (weather permitting). Following the statewide test, the siren will be tested twice monthly: Severe Weather test is sched-

uled for the 1st Wednesday of each month at 6 PM CT; Fire Test is scheduled for the 1st Thursday of each month at 6 PM CT. These audible tests are shortened versions of an actual emergency activation.

According to Thomas County Sheriff and Emergency Manager, Joseph Smith, the siren project is a solution to several glaring problems.

"When facing an emergency in Thomas County we have experts to respond, save lives, and protect property; however, we need to get their attention in as many ways as possible. A reliable siren will add a needed layer to our notification network along with radio paging and text messages."

The siren project has been a priority for the Thedford Rural Fire Protection District Board for quite some time. Challenged by providing fire protection services to one of the largest districts in the state, the Rural Fire Board recognized the importance of an effective alert system.

The approximately \$23,000.00 project was funded in part by a generous \$11,000.00 grant from the Bob & Susan Childers Fund administered by the Mid-Nebraska Community Foundation. Mr. and Mrs. Childers earmarked



JOSEPH SMITH PHOTO

The new siren pictured behind and on the left side of the Thedford Fire Hall. The siren was purchased in part with grant money from the Bob & Susan Childers Fund and ARPA Funds.

Annual Polar Bear Tank Race Deemed A Success



LINDA TEAHON

The American Tankers came in fifth place in the race, but first in the best costume division.

Story By:
Terri Licking

The Hooker County Community Center on the fairgrounds west of Mullen was the site of the 15th annual Polar Bear Tank Race held March 3 and 4. Over 40 brave souls from the states of Kansas, Colorado, and eastern Nebraska made the trek. Temperatures last year required coveralls and layers, but this year the race temperature ended up at 44 degrees as was displayed on the First State Bank kiosk on Saturday.

Mitch and Patty Glidden, owners of Glidden Canoe Rentals, have been the organizers and hosts with family and friends coming from near and far to help. They began this event when they owned the Sandhills Motel in

conjunction with their river adventure as a means of putting 'heads in beds' during slack tourism season. After all expenses, they give the money to the Sandhills Journey National Scenic Byway (SJNSB). Their contribution over the previous 14 races has amounted to approximately \$80,000. Their contribution has garnered the SJNSB one of eight national awards. Last year the SJNSB received the Leveraging Resources Award from the National Scenic Byway Foundation.

Several members of the SJNSB show their appreciation to the Gliddens by volunteering their time to help both days.

The weekend started with a soup cook-off on Friday night. Six soups were made and brought

in by Chris Jensen (2), Mullen; Linda Teahon, Dunning; Linda Lacy, Ashby; Jeanne Davis and sister Carolyn Henderson, Hyannis; and Twila and Lyle Phillips, Mullen. Chris Jensen saw all bases were covered and brought a vegan soup.

Linda Lacy, Ashby, dressed as a 1970's disco gal won the best-decorated table. Twila and Lyle Phillips won for their "Sandhill Chili" in the best soup category and current SJNSB president, Linda Teahon, won for the best name with her "Wild Cat Stew," accompanied by her cat litter casserole.

The evening concluded after the teams introduced themselves and time slots were drawn for the five racing teams, as well as a team auction by Brenda Masek, Purdum, emcee. There were five 'floating' teams going on the river Saturday.

Denny Whitfield, Bellevue, has attended every race. His team consists of his two sons, Tracy from Broomfield, Colorado, and Kyle of Omaha, and a nephew from North Platte. Denny's 15 shirts were hung on the wall Friday night and this year's gray was taken down and worn on Saturday.

The oldest tankers are Harold and Sharon 'MiMi' Axline of Dorchester. The two raced the first year, but have floated all of the other years due to health issues.

"My goal is to come back for the 16th PBTR and cel-

McLeod Takes First In NDA Poster Contest

During the month of January into February, students in second through sixth grade worked on this years Nebraska Agriculture Art Competition. Last year was the first year for local students to enter the contest. Any school in Nebraska can participate. Students get to create from scratch and then color, what Nebraska Ag means to them in the Sandhills.

"What's special about this project for me," Mrs. Ray said, "is the opportunity to teach students about the importance of agriculture in our area as most in elementary don't know what the big word means and how important/unique it is in our area compared to eastern schools who see Ag differently. Then I get to teach the students how to draw the animals, windmills, hay bales, etc."

This years theme was "Celebrating Nebraska Agriculture." With over 600 entries, Thedford Schools has a winner, among all those entries.

Mrs. Ray received a phone call from Christin Kamm, with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture to congratulate all our students on some very well done pictures, but Malechi McLeod received first place in the 1st - 2nd grade division. With the original copy having to go and stay in Lincoln, the lady was kind enough to send us back a scan for display at the school.

Congratulations to all those students who were able to complete it, there were some amazing drawings and colorings done, but a huge congrats to Malechi on his first place honors.

You can see all the winners at: <https://nda.nebraska.gov/kids/2023contest.html#firstsecond>



COURTESY

Thedford Public Schools student, Malechi McLeod, with his first place entry in the Nebraska Agriculture Art Competition. A copy of his work, along with other students entries, will be on display at the school.

braska.gov/kids/2023contest.html#firstsecond

The Art Department is excited to display this years art at the Spring Music Concert on Monday, May 8. Each class Kindergarten - high school will have one or two items displayed. Mrs. Ray wishes she could display everything they have done, but there isn't enough display racks or space in the gym.

Thedford Schools will also be entering the Mullen Art Show on April 11 (open to public from 3:00-5:00 p.m. CT) and the Conference Art Show which will be on display during the High School + Junior High Conference Track Meet in Arnold (Art will be in the gym) on Friday, April 29. Come out to both to see how talented our Junior High and High School students are.



LINDA TEAHON

The oldest tankers, have attended 14 of the 15 years Harold and Sharon 'MiMi' Axline, Dorchester, are pictured above. Every year MiMi is gifted with a birthday cake as her special day is just a couple days ahead of the PBTR. Her goal is to make it next year when she will be 80.