

“Fill The Wagons” Food Drive Huge Success

Thedford FCCLA and SkillsUSA members, Winter Benscoter, Brooklynn DeNaeyer and Laney Dahlberg, joined by the Thedford High School freshman class and the Thedford Elementary fifth grade class and sponsors, Mrs. Maseberg, Miss Franzen and Mrs Benscoter, recently went to the Mullen Assembly of God Church to deliver the over 1,600 items that the Thedford Public Schools students and staff had collected.

The fifth grade class collected 250 items and were named the winning class and got the opportunity to go bowling and enjoy ice cream.

The best decorated wagon contest was narrowly won by the freshman class with all classes participating.

The food drive and the wagon decorating contest

was a collaboration between the Thedford FCCLA and the Thedford SkillsUSA organizations and they would like to thank the wonderful Thedford community for contributing so many useful items. The Assembly of God Church has a nice collection of donated items in the basement of the church. They have a mobile food bank that goes out to area communities throughout the year. None of this could have taken place without the help of the Thedford School staff helping make this food drive and contest a reality. This was the first year and though there were some minor issues many items were received to help those in need. Thanks to all for your patience and understanding.

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THEDFORD SCHOOL PHOTO

Pictured above are the students and teachers who delivered the items to the Mullen Food Pantry, l-r: Tate Johnston, Winter Benscoter, Maurice Robinson, James Reiser, Dominic Rowse, Auyreon Robinson, Whitley Rasmussen, Ben Hart, Laney Dahlberg, Gabriel Vogt, Maciel Vargas, Brooklynn DeNaeyer, Grady Licking, Misti Parker, Emerson Pettit, Luke McIntosh, Danica Burk, Mary Licking and Hailey Mays.

Hamilton installed vice-president of North Platte Deanery of the Council of Catholic Women



COURTESY

A spirit-filled day was enjoyed by the women of the North Platte Deanery of the Council of Catholic Women held recently in Valentine at St. Nicholas Church. The Deanery installed Loretta Hamilton as vice president, heard Pro-Life updates, and legislative bills to watch. Community service projects were discussed prior to Mass and meditation. Fellowship and a delicious lunch followed and was enjoyed by those in attendance. A fall meeting is planned at North Platte St. Patrick's meeting hall for September 30th and all women are encouraged to attend. Focus for that meeting will be a baby shower for the North Platte Women's Resource Center which serves pregnant women in the area and runs completely on donations.

Vinton First Female NDA Director

Sherry Vinton has been confirmed as the director of the Nebraska Department of agriculture, making her the first woman to head the agency.

Vinton, of Whitman, is a fifth-generation rancher with a family operation in the Nebraska Sandhills. She was appointed as director by Gov. Jim Millen and confirmed by the Nebraska Legislature. Vinton replaces Steve Wellman, who held the post under former Gov. Pete Ricketts beginning in 2017.

A graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she studied accounting, Vinton has



served on the Cattlemen's Beef Board and the Nebraska Environmental Trust board.

Vinton also served as treasurer and mentor for the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition and is a member of the Agriculture Builders of Nebraska.

Starting in 2019, Vinton served as vice president of Nebraska Farm Bureau and served as a member of its board for six years.

In her presentation to the Legislature's Agriculture Committee, Vinton said she would make international trade of the state's agriculture products a top priority.

"I will continue to defend, promote, and grow Nebraska agriculture," Vinton said.

Beef Meeting April 12 in Thedford

Take a break from calving, Wednesday, April 12 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. CT and join Farm Credit Services of America and Nebraska Extension at the Sandhills Corral, Thedford, to discuss cattle and grazing management strategies in 2023.

The most recent National Weather Service Climate Prediction predicts most of Nebraska to remain in drought, but with improvement through the end of June 2023. Pasture management, nutrition, and reproduction options and plans going forward will be discussed at this program. Speakers include Jerry Volesky, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) range and forage specialist; Don Adams, retired UNL range beef cow nutrition specialist; and Rick Funston, UNL beef reproduction specialist.

Light appetizers will be provided, so please RSVP for this free program by calling the Central Sandhills Area Extension office at 308-645-2267, online at <https://go.unl.edu/april12rsvp>, or email T.L. Meyer, beef educator at tl.meyer@unl.edu.

New Signs Installed

The new signs, naming the Thomas County Airport in Thedford (KTIF) as the Nebraska Department of Transportation's General Aviation Airport of the Year for 2022 have been installed along Highway 2 in Thedford.

The award was presented to representatives of the Thomas County Airport Authority during the 2023 meeting and conference of the Nebraska Department of Transportation/Aeronautics in Kearney.

Pilots who utilize KTIF get a unique view of the Nebraska National Forrest and the gem that is the Nebraska Sandhills. They also having access to a pilot's lounge and other amenities. The Thomas County Airport is located south of Thedford and tucked in west of Highway 83.



TERRI LICKING

Lake McConaughy guests seeing results of park upgrades

Upgrades to Lake McConaughy State Recreation Area near Ogallala in 2022 have improved boating access, traffic flow, fishing amenities, beach access and more.

A \$3.5 million boating access project significantly upgraded Martin Bay's entrance, parking area and high-water boat ramp, and the Cedar View Bay boat ramp.

The Martin Bay high-water boat ramp has an 11% grade, compared to 3.5% before the project. The steeper grade makes launching boats easier. The two-lane ramp has a turnaround and boat staging area. The addition of accessible parking and resurfacing were among many improvements to the existing lot. A rest-room with flush toilets was added as well.

A Barracuda fish-cleaning station, valued at \$55,000, also was installed with funding by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Sportfish Restoration Program. Martin Bay previously had no fish-cleaning station.

The Martin Bay entrance was upgraded to three lanes to improve traffic flow. This reduces the number of cars on or near the highway, improving safety. With two



A \$3.5 million boating access project at Lake McConaughy State Recreation Area provided several improvements at Martin Bay, including an upgrade to the high-water boat ramp, which now has an 11% grade, compared to 3.5% before the project. Eric Fowler/NebraskaLand Magazine/NGPC

gatehouse booths, more guests can be helped simultaneously, to allow faster entry into the park. A roundabout also was installed to help with traffic flow.

The renovation of the Cedar View boat ramp has improved boat launching on the west end of the lake. Workers replaced some of the old ramp, which was cracked with erosion under the concrete. The ramp's entrance was widened and the top section extended. A new exit lane leads back to the parking lot, which has a new vault toilet.

The final part of this

project to be completed is the motorized water trail, scheduled for completion by summer. This is a marked route on navigable waters for recreational use. Improved boating access sites, once completed at opposite ends of the reservoir, will be the first element of this trail.

Another Cedar View upgrade was the addition of a Barracuda fish-cleaning station, replacing a 10-year-old unit. This improvement of nearly \$55,000 was funded 50% by Nebraska Game and