

Passing of the torch

Story & Pictures By
Marcia Hora
The Stapleton Enterprise

The number of family-owned propane marketers continues to dwindle and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find someone to step in and take over small businesses in rural communities. Steve and Cindy Frey, owners of Frey's Propane, Inc. in Stapleton, began taking steps several years back to find someone to carry the torch for their customers in the village and surrounding area.

Dan Morash and his family will officially take over the business on September 1 and a new name, Dan's Propane, Inc., is now emblazoned on the side of the truck.

Dan and Joni Morash and their children, Keith, 16, Summer, 15, and Paige, 11, live west of Stapleton on the Bakewell place and are ready to begin a new chapter in their lives.

The Morashes moved to Logan County 14 years ago and Dan has worked as a diesel mechanic in North Platte for the past 21 years. He grew up on a ranch 10 miles southeast of Hershey, graduated from Hershey High School and Southeast Community College at Milford. After marrying Joni, a North Platte High School graduate, they moved back to North Platte before relocating and purchasing their present home.

Joni worked as a para-educator at Stapleton Public Schools and then pursued her teaching degree. She is now the fourth grade teacher at Stapleton Public Schools where Keith is a junior

and Paige, a sixth grader. Summer, a sophomore, attends Arnold Public School.

"Cindy is very persuasive and I would have to say forced us a little into thinking about taking over the business," Dan said. "Two years ago I started working with Steve as an intern and learned the ropes, routes, and everything it takes to run the business."

Dan is now ready to hit the propane trail after obtaining all the necessary licensing and schooling.

"I was not happy at my current employment and thought why not pursue a completely different field," Dan said. "It finally came down to why not. I like small town rural Nebraska and this job gives me a sense of purpose I didn't have with my previous employment."

The Morashes have also purchased two houses in the village and Dan has remodeled them. He is now renting the houses out to help bring families to town.

Life will now be different for Steve Frey who has been the local propane delivery guy since 1979. He took over Hanna's Supply propane business after Mike Hanna showed him the ropes many moons ago. Battling cancer and becoming "cancer free," undergoing knee replacement over 10 years ago and dealing with a propane shortage last season took a toll. Steve said last winter that it would be his last one.

For 43 winters Steve has been filling up his 3000-gallon propane delivery truck at his 18,000-gallon bulk plant and making deliveries. There are 267 residents in Stapleton



The Morash family has purchased Frey's Propane, Inc. and will operate the business as Dan's Propane, Inc. Pictured, l-r: Keith, Dan and Joni, Paige and Summer. Dan began working under Steve Frey two years ago. He completed all of the necessary licensing and schooling and is now ready to serve the Stapleton area with all your propane needs.

and Frey's Propane has 350 customers within a 50-mile radius including businesses, the school, residents, farmers and ranchers, who many like Steve and Cindy are natives of Stapleton.

The Freys have been known for reliable and exceptional service and they know each and every one of their customers. They have always run their business by check or cash and don't take credit cards. In 2019 they sold more than 400,000 gallons of propane.

Steve and Cindy are a two-person business with Steve dragging hoses at least 20 times a day and making sure the customer tanks are filled. Cindy does the billing,

bookwork and mans the phone.

She will continue to take calls for Dan's Propane at Frey's General Store where Dan will have his home base.

"Cindy will be answering calls and taking walk-ins and I'll be working out of the store," Dan said. "I very much appreciate the community and customer support I've received. Without the guidance of Steve, Cindy and Shawna I wouldn't be able to do this. I look forward to taking care of my customers the same way Steve and Cindy did and provide them with quality, personal service."

Steve, Cindy and Shawna will continue to operate Frey's General Store that carries a full

line of hardware, paint, and everything you need for your farm and home. They will continue to sell auto propane and fill small bottles as they have before. You'll also find them running their bed and breakfast (without the breakfast), a campground, and storage unit. They have one part-time helper, Sherri Pipal.

And, of course they will continue to work in their large garden, beautiful yard, sweet corn patch and care for their chick-

ens. You'll also find them around the village working wherever and whenever needed including with the Stapleton Area Chamber of Commerce and at St. John's Catholic Church.

"We have greatly appreciated your support in our propane business and we cannot thank you enough for your patronage and friendship over the years," Steve said. "We look forward to continue seeing you in the store."

Chamber News

A splash pad update, barbecue report, and Farmer's Market were topics of discussion at the August 22 regular Stapleton Area Chamber of Commerce meeting.

A complete barbecue report will be given at the September meeting as not all bills were finalized. To date a total of \$3,215.00 was deposited from the barbecue without expenses. The number of mail-in donations was down this year. There were many out-of-town people, but few local people in attendance. Volunteers willing to help and donate their time are still few and far between.

John and Rebecca Peterson have taken over the sign project and the splash pad committee is sponsoring a pop-up sale in September and is soliciting items. Donations are coming in for the project.

Applications for junior Chamber members have been given out and are due September 11.

A report on the Farmer's Market showed agreement that it started too soon this year. The same people came every

week to purchase items and a coordinator is needed to take it on and get more advertising out. The Farmer's Market will be revisited next year as to whether or not it is feasible to continue.

A membership drive in January was discussed and will be decided at an upcoming meeting.

Chamber membership to date stands at 59.

The Stapleton Area Chamber of Commerce meets the fourth Tuesday at noon at the Stapleton Community Center. The September meeting will be the 26th.

Motorist Cited With DUD

A tip by a motorist and a call by a local business resulted in the arrest of a 60-year-old Kansas man Friday, August 18. A call was made to dispatch at approximately 5:00 p.m. in reference to a disoriented driver. He had hit the cement barriers at the gas pumps at Kimber's, got fuel and took off after paying inside.

Logan County Sheriff

Motorist
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Familiar faces will remain at Frey's General Store as Steve, Cindy and Shawna will continue to operate the full service hardware store that has everything for farm, home and ranch. Cindy will be manning the phone for Dan Morash, the new owner of Frey's Propane, Inc., as he takes over the propane side of the business and it will not be known as Dan's Propane, Inc.

Office Closed Labor Day

Creative Printers and Herbie's Speakeasy will be open Saturday, September 2, but will be closed Monday, September 4 for Labor Day. Watch for the open flag outside.

Lone Valley Club To Meet In September

The Lone Valley Club will meet for a no-host lunch and meeting at noon on Sunday, September 10, 2023. The meeting will be held at the Stapleton Senior Friendship room in the Stapleton Community Center.

Weather

DATE	HI	LO	MT
20	95	67	0
21	88	68	0
22	96	68	0
23	99	68	0
24	95	64	0
25	96	64	0

Heavy dew was observed on August 21. Winds measuring 27 MPH was recorded on August 22 at 2:35 p.m. The temperature was 85 degrees at 10:00 p.m. on August 23 and 80 degrees at 10:45 p.m. on August 24.

McPherson Co. News



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- Graphic Files
- Between The Lines
- Stockman Tour

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- Logan County Noxious Weed Control
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