

Your Local Newspapers Bring Home Awards

Two full days of learning, connecting and discussion made up the 2024 Nebraska Press Association convention held April 26 and 27 at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel in Lincoln. Newspaper people from across the state gathered for the 151st time to participate in sessions, honor journalists, and recognize winners in the Better Newspaper Contest. This year's contest drew 2,569 entries and was judged by the South Carolina Press Association.

NPAS president Marcia Hora, owner and publisher of The Stapleton Enterprise, McPherson County News and Thomas County Herald, passed the gavel to newly elected president Dee Klein of North Platte. Klein, who joined The Telegraph in 1990, is Lee Enterprises' regional business development director for western Nebraska.

Hora addressed her colleagues and said it had been an honor and privilege to serve as NPAS/One Press president.

"I enjoyed establishing relationships with newspaper people across the state and to represent you in Washington, D.C. at the National Newspaper Association convention. Newspapers remain strong because of the dedication and commitment each one of you have and the role you play in communities across the state. From the smallest villages to the largest cities, newspapers continue to be the trusted source of local news and are reaching readers in more ways than ever before. My fellow board members and the staff at Nebraska Press Association have worked hard this past year to look at problems our industry faces. This included a strategic planning meeting in Kearney. Rest assured, we care about every newspaper and the challenges ahead."

Other NPAS officers are Lynell Morgan, The Elgin Review, vice president; Marcia Hora, immediate past president; Tim Linscott, Fairbury Journal-News; Carrie Pitzer, Antelope Co. News, Orchard/Neligh; Paul Swanson, The Enterprise Group, Blair; and newly elected Barbara Perez, Sidney Sun-Telegraph.

Nebraska Press Association officers are Rob Dump, Hartington Cedar Co. News, president; John Erickson, Bridgeport News-Blade, vice president; Cody Gerlach, Cambridge Valley Voice News, treasurer; Kevin Peterson, Wayne Herald, immediate past president; Randy Sadd, Doniphan Herald; Michael Happ, St. Paul Phonograph-Herald; and Donnis Hueftler-Bullock, Custer County Chief, Broken Bow.

The Friday night reception and banquet featured the Master Editor-Publisher award, Harpst Leadership Nebraska award, and Nebraska State College Systems award to NPA. Live auctions and raffles followed each banquet. Amy Johnson, Springfield Herald and Gerri Peterson, Hooker County Tribune, Mullen, emceed the Friday noon "Fun Lunch" featuring a tailgate/grill-out buffet, games and prizes.

The Nebraska Press Association Foundation sponsored a cornhole tournament Thursday evening, April 25. The fundraiser raised money for journalism scholarships.



TODD VON KAMPEN, THE NORTH PLATTE TELEGRAPH

Marcia Hora of Stapleton, outgoing 2023-24 president of the Nebraska Press Advertising Service/One-Press, passes on her gavel Saturday to Dee Klein of North Platte at the annual Nebraska Press Association convention in Lincoln. Klein, who joined The Telegraph in 1990, is Lee Enterprises' regional business development director for western Nebraska. Hora is owner and publisher of the Stapleton Enterprise, McPherson County News and Thomas County Herald.

Honored With Six Awards

The Stapleton Enterprise and Thomas County Herald brought home the following Certificate of Awards:

Division B Stapleton Enterprise

Second Place: Community Promotion Advertisement - Stapleton's Annual Christmas Event. Judge's Comments - Fun design choices add a lot of pizzazz to this ad!

Third Place: Advertising Campaign - Community

First Bank - Putting Community First. Judge's Comments - Appreciate the consistency of design in the ads as a campaign for the bank. Really puts forward the community message they were trying to convey.

Third Place: Breaking News Photography - Two Vehicle Accident at Intersection. Judge's Comments - Strong photo that gives a clear view of the accident scene.

Third Place: Personal Column - Odds & Ends by Marcia Hora - It Could Happen To Any of Us. Judge's Comments - This column is an act of solidarity with small town newspapers that needed to be said.

Third Place: Public Notice and Its Promotion - We Play A Role In Local Government - Read Public Notices.

Division A Thomas County Herald

Third Place: Advertising Campaign - Sandhills Family Dental. Very creative tag lines to match advertisers message. Able to get message across without the use of color. Very well done.

Nebraska National Forests & Grasslands To Celebrate Smokey Bear's 80th Birthday

On August 9th, Smokey Bear will turn 80 years old. There will be opportunities to see Smokey at Forest, Grassland and community events all over the footprint of Nebraska National Forests and Grasslands (NNFG).

The celebration starts with a coloring contest open to area students, with categories for ages 3-6, 7-11, and 12-15. Students can print coloring pages from the 80th celebration's website, or pick them up at local NNFG office and visitor center locations. The coloring pages must be turned in by July 31st, either to a local NNFG US Forest Service office location, mailed via US Postal Service: Smokey Bear Coloring Contest c/o Supervisor's Office, 125 N. Main Street, Chadron, NE 69337 - or emailed to SM.FS.nnf_info@usda.gov. There will be a winner selected from each category and they will receive a

tree from NNFG's own Bessey Nursery, in Halsey, NE.

The celebration website will also have a running list of events happening throughout the summer, and events will be announced on NNFG's social media sites. We post notification of operations on our Facebook page; (<https://www.facebook.com/NebraskaForestsGrasslands/>), and on X @USFS-Nebraska. Events currently planned are as follows:

- Smokey Bear will greet students in Stapleton & Halsey, NE on May 13th at Bessey Ranger District

- Smokey Bear appearance at Broken Bow Library May 22nd

- Smokey Bear appearance at Chadron Public Library May 25th

We look forward to seeing you out there, celebrating 80 years of Smokey's lessons about how to avoid human caused wildfire.



Plenty of improvements await state park visitors

Plenty of improvements in Nebraska's north-central state parks await visitors this year. Projects completed in 2023 or to be finished in 2024 will appeal to an array of park users. The following is a roundup of those improvements and projects:

Sherman Reservoir State Recreation Area

The demand for modern camping facilities in central Nebraska is high. At Sherman Reservoir

State Recreation Area, West Ridge Campground has been expanded in a \$1.1 million project. The campground now has 61 campsites with Electric Plus (30/50 amp) service. A shower house roof also was replaced.

Smith Falls State Park

Visitors again are enjoying the sight of Smith Falls, Nebraska's tallest waterfall. The waterfall at Smith Falls State Park, and the newly constructed 500-foot boardwalk to it, reopened in 2023, replacing the wooden boardwalk.

The \$2.7 million project includes a boardwalk built of composite decking on a steel frame with aluminum handrails and is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. New benches provide places for visitors to rest and a platform over the stream has been added midway up the walkway.

Calamus State Recreation Area

A new activity is available for visitors of popular Calamus State Recreation Area as an archery range has been built at a cost of just more than \$6,000.

Long Pine State Recreation Area

Two Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant vault toilets are expected to be replaced this year at Long Pine State Recreation Area.

ation Area.

Keller Park State Recreation Area

Campers at Keller Park State Recreation Area will find RV campsites that received an electrical upgrade at a cost of more than \$300,000. Two ADA-compliant vault toilets are expected to be replaced this year.

Merritt Reservoir State Recreation Area

Good news for campers

at Merritt Reservoir State Recreation Area, the West Beeds campground will expand by 14 Electric Plus sites and a new shower house in a \$900,000 project to be completed this year.

Victoria Springs State Recreation Area

A roof was replaced at Victoria Springs State Recreation Area for more

See State Parks
Page 2