

Mulligan Retires After 30 Years With USPS

MARCIA HORA

Judy Mulligan of Thedford has retired after 30 plus years with the United States Postal Service. A retirement party, hosted by her family, was held in her honor May 31 at the Sandhills Corral at Thedford.

Mulligan began her tenure as a clerk in Valentine where she served in that capacity for seven years. She served as postmaster at Kilgore, Hyannis, Thedford, Stapleton, and Mullen, and also worked in South Dakota. Mulligan was an orientation instructor for new hires in North Platte for the last eight years.

"All told I have worked in over 20 offices over the years in Nebraska and South Dakota," Mulligan said. "I will miss the wonderful people in all the communities I served over the years and I've had awesome crews at the post offices.

After serving as Stapleton Postmaster for six years she made the move to take the Mullen Postmaster position in 2023 as it was closer to her home in Thedford.

"I had intended on working several more years before retiring, but with much prayer and consideration I decided to retire because of all the changes and new policies, procedures and expectations that can't be met and out of my control," Mulligan said. "I will continue to pray for the sustainability and the service standards to improve as soon as possible. I would like to thank everyone who has been a part of my journey in the USPS and helped me along the way. Thank you also to those who wished me well in this new chapter of my life."

Mulligan went on to say she now will have more time to spend with her grandchildren and be able to travel.



COURTESY

Pictured at the retirement party are, l-r: Doris Sierks, Dustin Frank and Karter, Harper Mulligan, Chancey Mulligan, Postmaster Judy Mulligan, Caleb Mulligan, Rilee Mulligan, Kimber Frank and Victoria Frank. Judy was honored for 30 plus years with the United States Postal Service and was currently serving as Mullen Postmaster.

Valuation Change Notices Mailed Out

Thomas County Clerk-Assessor Lorissa Hartman has sent out the 2024 property valuation change notices.

Residential values are figured by using market information. Sales of residential properties are evaluated for the last two years and in those years there has been a very strong real estate market on residential properties in the county.

A complete reappraisal was completed on homes in Thedford, Seneca and Halsey. New costing tables were updated to June 2023 and new depreciation tables were developed using the current sales of homes. Lot values were also increased.

Nebraska statute requires residential sales ratio has to be between 92% and 100%. The level of value has been deter-

mined to be 98% of market value.

Home and building site values increased throughout the county.

A complete reappraisal of all commercial property was completed in 2023 and new costing, depreciation tables and lot/land values were updated.

A list of sales used for residential and commercial properties can be viewed in the Thomas County Clerk's office.

Agricultural land values are figured by using market information. Sales of grass from the last three years are evaluated and used to determine the value per acre and the current sales ratio. During this three-year period there has been an increase in the market value of ag land. Grass land values were raised

and irrigated acres remained at the same value of \$2,250 per acre.

Nebraska Statutes require that Ag land sales ratio has to be between 69% to 75% of market value. The sales ratio for 2024 came in at 69%.

A list of sales used during the study period can be viewed in the Thomas County Clerk's office.

If you feel your assessment does not reflect a fair market value for your property you have the right to protest the 2024 value of your property.

If you choose to file a protest this must be done between June 1 and July 1, since June 30 falls on a Sunday.

If you have questions or concerns about your property valuation change notice you may contact Lorissa Hartman at 308-645-2261.

Thedford Art Guild Open Show

Entries are being taken for the 2024 Thedford Art Guild Open Show to be held at the Thedford Art Gallery.

Adult entries will be taken for \$5.00 per entry, no limit. Youth 12 and under is \$2.00/entry, no limit.

Categories are art, photography, or 3D judged separately.

Entries are due Monday, July 1 at 2:00 p.m.

Contact Terri Licking at 308-645-2436 (24 hour notice please) or email her at twlicking@gmail.com. Please use TAG show in the subject line.

You may also contact Ruth Gordon at 308-645-2364 (an hour notice please) to submit entries.

There will be monetary

awards (1st to 3rd place in each category), a people's choice award, and overall best of show will receive \$100.

Entry forms are available at Prairie Art Center, North Platte, or Ewoldt's Grocery, or request a form by emailing Terri Licking at twlicking@gmail.com.

Domestic Well Owner Is Your Drinking Water Safe?

A good supply of fresh water is essential to human existence. We use fresh water not only for drinking, but for bathing, growing food, cleaning, watering animals and watering lawns. In Nebraska about 95 percent of rural residents get their household water supply from private or domestic wells. If they are not properly protected, these wells are at risk of being contaminated from several sources. Potential sources of groundwater contamination which may be present near your home include septic tanks, animal waste, pesticides, fertilizers, fuel storage tanks, household chemicals, used motor oil, etc. The potential for contamination in our area is also increased because of the sandy soil.

The only way to know if nitrates and or bacteria are present in your drinking water is by testing because both contaminants are colorless, odorless, and tasteless. A water test for nitrate is highly recommended for households with infants, pregnant women, nursing mothers, or elderly people, as these groups are most susceptible to nitrates. Coliform bacteria are microscopic, generally harmless organisms that live in the intestinal tract of many warm blooded animals including humans and are excreted into the environment through feces. Although most coliform bacteria are not directly disease causing, some are often found with other, more dangerous strains of bacteria like E. coli, shigella and salmonella. Some strains of E. coli are known to cause vomiting, diarrhea, and other serious gastrointestinal problems.

As of January 2023, the



Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NDNR) listed over 381 domestic wells registered in the Upper Loup NRD the state. Domestic wells were not required to be registered with the state prior to September 1993, therefore thousands of domestic wells exist that are not registered with the NDNR. Unlike public water supplies, the quality of private water sources in Nebraska is unregulated by federal or state mandate. Thus, well owners are encouraged to have their well water tested and make sure their well is properly maintained to help protect their health and safety.

The Upper Loup Natural Resources District (ULNRD) has had in place a groundwater quality monitoring program since 2011. All sub-districts are monitored, on a cyclic schedule, for nitrates and upon request bacteria. We are happy to report that since we started collecting and testing samples average nitrate levels have been well below the Environ-

mental Protection Agency (EPA) Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 10 parts-per-million (ppm) across the entire NRD District.

The potential for water contamination is always present therefore water quality requires long term monitoring. The Upper Loup NRD recommends that all domestic wells, either registered or unregistered, get tested at least once every five years. Wells in Sub District 4, which includes Thomas County east of Highway 83 and the south third of Brown County and all of Blaine County, are on schedule to be tested this year. We are glad to offer this important safety service to you AT NO CHARGE. Samples are most often collected from an outside hydrant so there would be no need for you to be present at collection time. If you would like to have your well tested, please contact our office at 308-645-2250 or email the district at ulnrd@upperloupnrd.org to get on the list.

Summer Reading Program Underway

The first week of the Summer Reading Program was held Wednesday, June 5. All age groups learned about space. The Pre-school and Kindergarten group had 11 kids in attendance. The first through third grade group consisted of four and the fourth through sixth graders had 10 students in attendance.

Preschool and Kindergarten kids were given astronaut helmets to wear during their space adventure. The kids went inside a special made space dome (ice fishing hut) and listened to books and enjoyed the glow in the dark stars. The kids painted their own planets using paint, balloons, and glitter.

The first through third graders also got to listen to books about astronauts and space. The Central Sandhills Area Extension Office 4-H Assistant Shaniya Albertus led the kids in making stomp rockets out of empty Capri Sun pouches. The kids talked about which straws made the rockets fly the farthest. The



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Marcy Andersen reading a story to the kids inside the "Space Dome"

group then made plants using shaving cream and food coloring.

The last group was the fourth through sixth graders. Shaniya taught this group of kids about stellar optics and they assembled a telescope and learned how they work. They also made the Capri Sun stomp rockets.

The Summer Reading Program will continue

June 12, 18, and 26th. Please let Marcy at the library know if your child will be attending so she will have enough supplies.

Helpers for the week were Emerson Pettit, Wesley Carr, Bronc Cinch Reiser, Shelby Schukei, Brooklynn DeNaeyer and Connie Browleit.