

Ballots in the mail for special election



MARCIA HORA - THOMAS COUNTY HERALD

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Ballots have been mailed out June 17 for the Thedford Public Schools special election. If you are not a registered voter the last day for mail-in registration is June 21 and the last day for in-person registration is June 28. All ballots must be in to the Thomas County election office by 5:00 p.m. on July 9.

Voters are being asked to allow Thedford Public Schools to increase the Tax Request Authority by \$1 million for the 2024-2025 school year.

Superintendent Blake Dahlberg has provided *The Herald* with information to frequently asked questions about the special election.

What is the school asking for? We are asking for the patrons of the district to allow us to increase our Tax Request Authority by \$1 million for the 2024-2025 school year.

Is the school asking for an extra \$1 million from the taxpayers with this election? No. We are asking for our Tax Request Authority to be raised by \$1 million. We had to set a number for the ballot question and wanted to make sure we had enough room to work with. The actual increase could be quite a bit lower.

What is "Tax Request Authority"? The state puts a cap on the amount of revenue we can generate for our general fund. To determine this, they use a

formula that includes non-tax revenue from last school year, special education reimbursement from this school year, next year's state aid, and our property tax request. The state allows a 3% growth, and our current Tax Request Authority is \$2,118,720.

Isn't the Board able to increase the Tax Request Authority on their own? Yes, the board can add an additional 7% increase, but that will not create the needed revenue.

Why do you need to do an election? The legislation that was passed last year, which sets our Tax Request Authority, states that any increase over the 3% allowed by the state and the 7% Board in-

crease must be approved by the voters.

Why does the school need more money? We reduced our property tax request over the past five years, significantly after COVID due to economic uncertainties, drought, and cattle prices that we were facing. Over the past three years, our expenditures are higher than our revenue and we have spent down our reserves.

Weren't you talking about a building project recently? We did have many discussions about the possibility of doing a building project. The majority of the discussion was trying to determine what it might look like and what would be the process we needed to go

through. The biggest obstacle in those discussions was asking for a bond. Those talks have died down over the past year and a half and we have put an indefinite hold on any building project discussion going forward.

Is spending the problem? No. In a comparison of 21 other schools our size, we had the 5th lowest general fund costs and 5th lowest cost per student. Even with being on the lower end of spending on this comparison, we have been able to maintain individual elementary classes, fine arts programs, career and technical education, and many extra curriculars that aren't offered at schools our size.

Will the Board be able to use this vote to increase their tax request freely for the next few years? No. This is a one-time increase that we are asking for in order to set a new baseline for our Revenue Cap going forward. We will set ourselves up to be able to live within the 3% that the state allows us, with very limited use of the board's 7% authority.

What will this do to the levy? Our current levy is \$0.57 per \$100 of valuation. This increase will bring the levy back into the \$0.70 to \$0.80 range that it was before we started making the cuts to our request.

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Locals Inducted Into Cowboy Hall Of Fame

The 19th Annual Nebraska Sandhills Cowboy Hall of Fame Banquet and Induction Ceremony was held June 8, 2024 at the 4-H Building at the Cherry County Fairgrounds in Valentine. Social hour was held prior to the benefit auction. The banquet and Induction Ceremony followed.

Those inducted this year were: Robert and Susan Childers; Theresa Beguin Strong; Richard (Dick) Caulfield; Forrest Ira (Skeet) McKillip; Ronny & Kay Morgan; Quincy D. Skinner; Daniel Carson; and Rex Adamson.

The Nebraska Sandhills Cowboy Hall of Fame came into existence in 2006 when Rodney Palmer, an Ainsworth lawyer and rancher, decided it was long overdue. The organization was started to honor the western lifestyle and those who lived it.

The initial Board of Directors was composed of hand picked, cowboy savvy people by Palmer from 14 Nebraska Sandhills Counties. One director was chosen from each of the following counties: Holt, Rock, Keya Paha, Brown, Cherry, Loup, Garfield, Blaine, Thomas, Custer, Hooker, Grant, Arthur and Sheridan. The Board was expanded to 18 counties in 2008 with the addition of Lincoln, Keith, McPherson and Logan Counties.

In 2012 the board was again expanded to its present day size with the addition of Wheeler and Garden Counties.

Palmer is the current Executive Secretary and

Ainsworth is the present headquarters.

Current Board of Directors and the counties they represent are: Kelly Wilson, Arthur; Walt Rhoades, Blaine; Dan Dailley, Brown; A.B. Cox, Cherry; Vern Oatman, Custer; Gary Powles, Garden; Dale Prickett, Garfield; Larry Burgess, Grant; Junior Young, Holt; Rich Boots, Hooker; Paul Cleveland, Keith; Dick Caufield, Keya Paha; Joe Nutter, Lincoln; Vern Boeser, Logan; Ronny Morgan, Loup; Ron Sowers, McPherson; Bill Herrington, Rock; Buck Buckles, Sheridan; Charles Daly, Thomas; Dennis Derner, Wheeler.

The photos of all Hall of Fame inductees and biographies can be viewed at Ainsworth. Nomination forms are available by contacting any Board Member or Rod Palmer at Box 127, Ainsworth, Nebraska or calling 402-387-2212. Nominees must be 50 years or older or deceased. The nominee must fit the following criteria: The Nebraska Sandhills Cowboy Hall of Fame honors those individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the Western Lifestyle or horse culture in the areas of competition, business, support of rodeo in the western lifestyle in the Sandhills of Nebraska, this includes rodeo, ranching, rodeo stock contractors, western arts, western entertainment and special achievement awards.

Since its inception over 150 individuals have been honored.



LINDA TEAHON

Dan Carson and his wife Shirley of Purdum, are pictured with Dan's Hall of Fame induction plaque.



LINDA TEAHON

Local Board of Directors members, l-r: Vern Boeser and Charlie Daly. Vern represents Logan County and Charlie is the Thomas County representative.



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Bob and Susan Childers were honored posthumously into the Nebraska Sandhills Cowboy Hall of Fame. Members of their family were on hand to accept the honor for them at the 2024 Banquet and Induction ceremony.