



Stapleton Public Schools Releases Statement On Death Of Secondary Principal

MARCIA HORA

Stapleton Public Schools Superintendent Brian Redinger said school counselors have been and will remain available to assist students and staff following the recent death of Jeremiah Johnson, secondary principal and activities director at the school.

The school district was notified about an incident on January 18 involving Mr. Johnson that made a student feel very uncomfortable. Immediately after the notification, Mr. Johnson was asked to cease contact with students.

A meeting was held with school administration and the parties involved in the incident on January 20. At this meeting it was reported the student had not been made to feel uncomfortable by Mr. Johnson at any time prior to the incident.

The Logan County Sheriff's Department contacted Stapleton Public Schools on January 21 regarding allegations that Jeremiah Johnson had made inappropriate physical contact with a student. The school district cooperated with law enforcement during the investigation and was beginning the legal process regarding Mr. Johnson's employment when the school district learned of his death.

"We appreciate all work put in by law enforcement in this matter," Superintendent Redinger said. "Our hearts go out to anyone affected by these events. The school

district remains committed to providing a safe, stable and appropriate environment for students. Please know the school district has adopted and enforces a policy about professional boundaries and appropriate relationships between students. We encourage anyone with any concerns regarding school employee behavior to report them to the superintendent of schools and law enforcement. Working together, we can ensure that Stapleton Public Schools will provide a safe and successful environment for everyone involved."

The Logan County Sheriff's office reported they were contacted on January 20 by a concerned Stapleton Public Schools parent advising Sheriff Carson a student had been inappropriately contacted by Jeremiah Johnson while on school grounds.

Logan County attorney Andrew Van Velson filed charges against Mr. Johnson for Second Degree Sexual Abuse by a School Employee.

A warrant was sought as law enforcement in Nevada had located Mr. Johnson's car. Nevada law enforcement entered a hotel room listed under Mr. Johnson's name and found him dead upon arrival. The state's warrant was recalled and proceedings were dismissed.

The Logan County Sheriff's office is continuing to look into other details surrounding this situation.

The County Attorney and Logan County Sher-

iff's office remind parents to be vigilant of their children's whereabouts and actions. Though there is no immediate threat known to law enforcement, predatory conduct is happening more frequently than ever, especially among people who hold a position of authority over young people. Young individuals may not understand grooming behavior as well as an adult would including buying gifts, messaging electronically, and communicating outside what would be considered "normal" times and places.

Parents need to have discussions with their children and the community is asked to utilize vigilance in keeping children safe and reporting suspicious behavior to law enforcement.

Jeremiah Johnson started his duties as secondary principal and activities director in the fall of 2023. He served as an English Language Arts teacher prior to coming to Stapleton. He was at Cedar Bluffs Public Schools and before arriving at Cedar Bluffs he taught English at Elba Public Schools and Princeton High School in California. He coached a variety of sports at multiple levels and was the head middle school football coach and assistant middle school track coach at Cedar Bluffs. He spent six and a half years serving in the U.S. Air Force and worked four years for the National Park Service before obtaining his first teaching job in 2015.

Stapleton Golf Assn. Elects Officers

MARCIA HORA

The Stapleton Golf Association recently met for an annual meeting and new officers were elected. Cole Kinderknecht will serve as president, Mike Needs, vice president, Chayton Crow, secretary, and Chet Brown, treasurer. Board members are John Main, Skip Hecox, Scott Gaites and Jayce Doyle.

The board is wrapping up plans for their annual steak dinner and raffle to be held Saturday, February 8, at the Stapleton Community Center.

Tickets are on sale for the gun raffle and are \$10.00 each or 12 for \$100.00. This year's guns are a Ruger 9 mm FXR and a Ruger .17 HMR.

Steak dinner tickets are \$40.00 per person and

are available at the door. Everyone is welcome.

All golf course holes have now been sold. Items for the silent auction are needed. To purchase raffle tickets or to donate items contact a board member.

The social hour will begin at 5:00 p.m. followed by the meal at 6:30 p.m. Cash bar by Herbie's Speakeasy.

Bessey Ranger District Receives \$400,000 to Refurbish Forest Road 224

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission approved grantees for the Land and Water Conservation Fund Stateside Assistance Program and the Recreational Trails Program at its meeting Jan. 24 in Lincoln.

Commissioners approved the following grant awards, totaling more than \$1.9 million, for the Land and Water Conservation Fund Stateside Assistance Program:

- Columbus, \$215,606 for the Sertomaland inclusive playground replacement in East Pawnee Park;
- Lincoln, \$600,000 for an inclusive playground replacement in Antelope Park;
- Norfolk, \$511,500 for development of an additional softball complex at Ta-Ha-Zouka Park; and
- Sidney, \$600,000 for

the revitalization of Northside Park.

Funding from the LWCF comes from the U.S. Department of the Interior using revenues from federal oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf.

Commissioners also approved the following recreational trail projects for federal funding through the Recreational Trails Program:

- Imperial, \$250,000 to build the Prairie Sage Trail, a 2,400-foot-long concrete trail around the Chase County Community Hospital for the public, patients and staff. It will be the first recreational trail in Imperial;
- Lower Loup Natural Resources District, \$250,000 to build a 3,100-foot-long concrete trail at Pibel Lake Recreation Area;

• Nebraska Game & Parks Fort Kearney State Recreation Area, \$250,000 to redeck the 1,000-foot-long rail-to-trail bridge over the Platte River for park visitors, trail users and Sandhill crane watchers; and

• U.S. Forest Service Bessey Ranger District, \$400,000 to refurbish 1.7 miles of deteriorated Forest Road 224, which provides access to Whitetail Campground and many off-highway vehicle trails from the campground; it also would improve emergency services access to the area.

Funding from the RTP comes from the Federal Highway Administration and is made possible by a portion of the federal motor fuel excise tax paid by users of off-road recreational vehicles.

Best & Worst States To Retire

With retirees facing the pressures of inflation while often being on a fixed budget, the personal-finance website WalletHub has released its report on 2024's Best & Worst States to Retire, along with expert commentary, to identify where seniors can save the most money while enjoying the best quality of life.

The best states to retire are: 1. Florida; 2. Minnesota; 3. Colorado; 4. Wyoming; 5. South Dakota; 6. Pennsylvania; 7. New Hampshire; 8. Delaware; 9. North Dakota; and 10. Wisconsin.

The worst states to retire are: 41. Hawaii; 42. Arkansas; 43. West Virginia; 44. Rhode Island; 45. New Jersey; 46. New Mexico; 47. Washington; 48. Mississippi; 49.

Louisiana; 50. Kentucky. Nebraska comes it at 27th with affordability rank at 43rd; quality of life at 21st; and health care at 8th.

Living in the right place after you retire can make your money go a lot further. That's important considering the fact that 66% of non-retired adults say their retirement savings aren't on track. To determine the best states, WalletHub compared the 50 states across 46 key indicators of retirement-friendliness, from financial factors like tax rates and the cost of living to things like access to quality medical care and fun activities.

"Retirement is supposed to be relaxing, but it can also be incredibly stressful given that it typically puts people on a fixed income, which may

not be enough for them to live comfortably. As a result, the best states for retirees are those that have low taxes and a low cost of living to help retirees' budgets stretch as far as possible. Having access to excellent medical care and homemaking services is also crucial, especially for people who don't plan to retire in close proximity to their families," analyst Chip Lupo said.

Florida is known as a retirement paradise because of its relative low taxes for retired people, including no estates, inheritance or income taxes. Florida also receives more funding per senior from the Older Americans Act than all but two other states. These fund transportation, homemaker assistance and nutrition programs.

Weather

DATE	HI	LO	MT
24	28	11	0
25	45	20	.01
26	34	7	0
27	31	9	0
28	54	10	0
29	61	18	0
30	56	20	0
31	46	18	.02

Observations

Snow fall: .02" on Jan. 24
Winds: 22 MPH on Jan. 24 @ 11:33 a.m.; 20 MPH on Jan 29 @ 2:20 p.m.
Wind Chill: -1 degree on Jan 24 @ 2:00 a.m.; 4 on Jan. 26 @ 6:00 a.m.
Total Moisture For January - .35"; Normal - .35"
Total January Snow - 3.7"
Normal Average Annual Moisture - 23.52"

McPherson Co. News



- *Over The Hills*
- *Graphic Files*
- *Poem "I Won't Be An Angel"*

Public Notices

- McPherson Co. Commissioners & BOE Notice
- Stapleton Rural Fire Dist. Meeting Notice
- Upper Loup NRD Meeting Notice
- School District R-1 Meeting Notice
- McPherson Co. School Meeting Notice
- McPherson Co. One & Six Meeting Notice
- Village of Stapleton Meeting Notice
- Stapleton Golf Assn. Annual Meeting Proceedings

Index

Public Notices.....	2
Social Side	3
From The Past	3
Logan County Tales.....	3
Opinion Page.....	4
Comics	4
Classifieds	5
Nebraska Statewides.....	5
McPherson Co. News	6
Graphic Files	6
MCS School News	7
SPS School News	8
Maverick Sports.....	9
Puzzles.....	10
All Things Nebr.	10
Legislative News.....	11
Puzzle Answers	11
Sports	12
Senator Ricketts	13
100th & 102nd Birthdays	14