

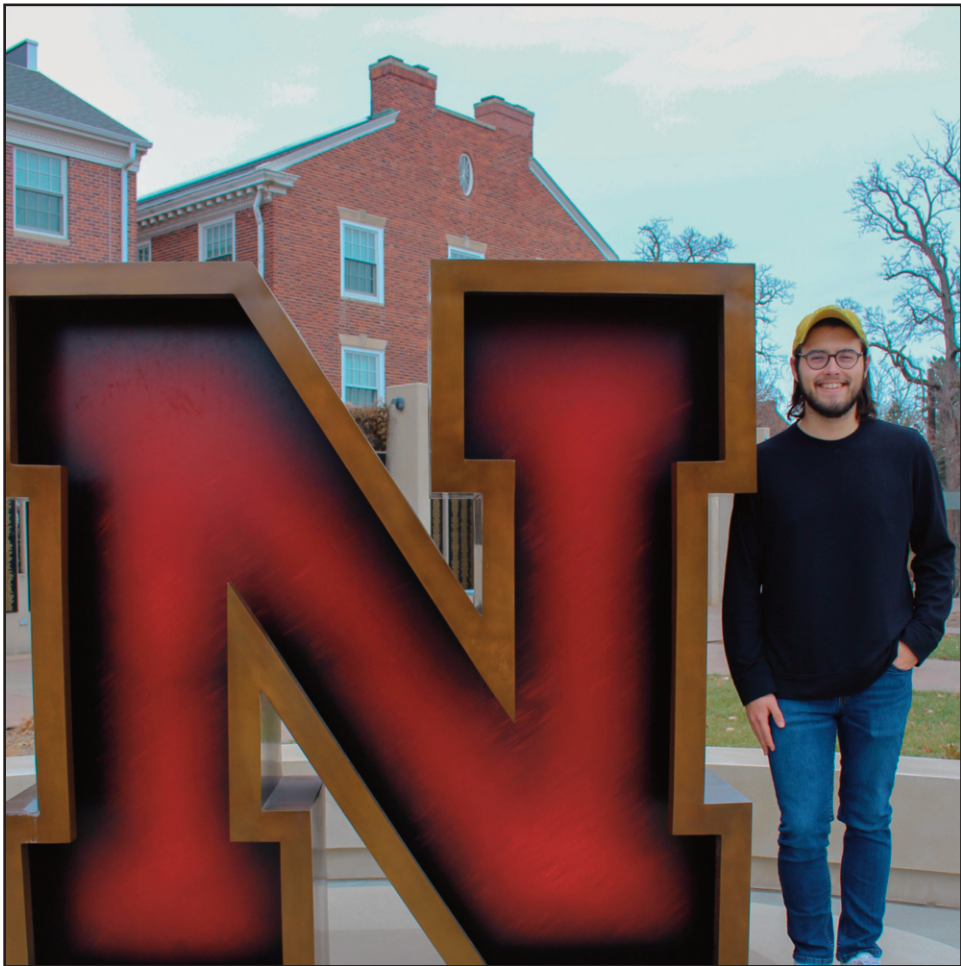
Eickhoff Joins Nebraska Extension Disaster Education Network

Owen Eickhoff is excited to join the Nebraska Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) as a Disaster Education Intern, serving Nebraska by helping educate and prepare communities for potential disasters.

Originally from Milford, Nebraska, Owen graduated from Milford High School in 2020 and is currently pursuing a degree in Emergency Management with a focus on Nonprofit Management and Natural Disasters at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. He plans to graduate in 2025, also earning minors in Nonprofit Management and Geography.

Owen's passion for helping others has guided his career path. He has previously worked with the Seward County Emergency Management Agency and the Red Cross and has volunteered independently during Nebraska's 2019 floods and various cleanup and rebuilding efforts since. Owen is also a 4-H alumnus, achieving the Diamond Clover award in 2019, and an Eagle Scout, earning the honor in 2017.

Owen and his wife, Meleah, live in Lincoln,



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where they both work with the college ministry "Christian Challenge" at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and play

in a worship band. He is the son of Karl and Jennifer Eickhoff of Milford, and the grandson of Ben Eickhoff of Thedford and

Sharon Eickhoff of North Platte. In his free time, Owen enjoys running, storm chasing, writing, hiking, and cooking.

Cell Phone Ban In Schools

Governor Jim Pillen testified before the Nebraska State Legislature's Education Committee on February 4 in support of LB 140, which proposes banning the use of cell phones by school students. Sen. Rita Sanders introduced the bill.

"There are two reasons for this bill," Pillen said. "First, it addresses what has become one of the most frequent and difficult to manage distractions in the classroom - students' cell phones. The second reason for this legislation is the serious impact that constant cell phone use has on our kids."

LB 140 requires school boards of each public school district to adopt a policy establishing rules and standards for cell usage. The bill also spells out certain exceptions such as when the cell phone is authorized by a teacher for educational purposes, in the case of an emergency, and for monitoring and management a student's health care.

During his testimony, Pillen referenced findings from Jonathan Haidt's book, "The Anxious Generation How the Great Rewiring of Child-

hood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness."

Haiti noted that young people receive 194 alerts from top social apps each day, equating to 11 notifications per waking hour, or one notification every five minutes.

Sanders said that for students to have the best chance of success in school, creating an educational environment free from digital distraction is key.

"I am committed to supporting policies that prioritize the well-being and academic growth of every student," she said. "By removing electronic communication devices from the classroom, we can create that environment, allowing both teachers and students to fully succeed."

Pollen added, "Our teachers need to be focused on helping their students learn, not policing cell phone use. LB 140 provides a common-sense approach to this issue, so that all our schools are on a level playing field."

Nebraska Attorney General Mike Hilgers and Department of Education Commissioner Dr. Brian Maher also testified in support of the bill.

Sitz & Johnston Angus Host 52nd Annual Bull Sale

Mike and Debra Sitz and family, and Joel and Bethany (Sitz) Johnston hosted their 52nd annual Bull Sale at the Burwell Livestock Market, on Monday, February 3, 2025. The north wind gusted bitter cold, but the roads were clear allowing stress free traveling for those potential buyers attending the sale.

With each passing year the bull offering is more consistent and following this pattern these bulls were the most uniform set of bulls offered yet by the Mike Sitz family. Ninety-three head of Mike Sitz, Ransom Sitz, and Joel Johnston's coming- Two-Year-Old Angus bulls averaged \$8021.

The high selling bull came from the Joel and Bethany Johnston herd. Lot 75, JJA Century 3157, a son of home raised MSAR Emblazon 2092 - 4079 (Century), and dam, JJA Dora 8116 has Coleman Charlo 0256# and MSAR Chinook 3055 in her pedigree. This thick and deep, high ratioing Century son, sold to repeat customer Roger and Ronda Stewart, Dunning, for \$17,000. A calving ease-bull, he had a 75-pound birth weight, with a 115 Wean Ratio and a 116 Yearling Ratio. EPD's on Lot 75 are 11 CED, 0.2 BW, 57 WW, 105 YW, 6 CEM, 29 Milk, and ranking in the top 20% for \$M



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with a 78 and top 30% in the angus breed for \$EN.

Repeat customer, James Ritz, Arcadia, Nebraska purchased Lot 44, another son out of the Johnston herd, JJA Atlantis 3167, for \$13,500. Lot 44 is a Square B Atlantis 8060 son, and the dam is a Pathfinder cow from the Marshall Queen cow line, and a MSAR Emblazon J 2092 - 4140 daughter. This bull had EPD's of -1 CED, 3.2 BW, 63 WW, 106 YW, 1 CEM Milk 30, and in the top 10% of the angus breed for \$M with an 83. He had a Wean Ratio of 112 and a Yearling Ratio of 111.

Taylor Land & Cattle, Amelia, NE purchased Lot 2, Ransoms Justified 3010, a KG Justified 3023

son from the Blackbird cow line for \$13,500. The dam is a daughter of MSAR Emblazon 2092. Lot 2 had a Birth Weight of 77 pounds and a Wean Ratio of 118 and a Yearling Ratio of 114. This bull ranked in the 24% of the angus breed for Docility and the top 2% for \$M at 94.

Ransom's Justified 3057, Lot 7, sold to Curtis Gurney, Burwell, NE for \$13,000. Ransom Sitz's herd descends from one cow in the Blackbird cow line, and Lot 7 was the heaviest calf at weaning, his grandam being one of the herd's top producing cows. Lot 7 had a Wean Ratio of 120 and a yearling Ratio of 110 with a 42cm Scrotal. The bull is

in the top 4% of the angus breed for \$M at 91.

Another repeat customer, Brandon Bruha, Ord, NE took home Lot 8, MSAR Justified 3061, for \$13,000. Another son of KG Justified 3023, this bull was from a Pathfinder dam and grandam, being the Blackbird cow line, with Papa Optima and CAR Chinook 786 close in her pedigree. This bull had an 88-pound birth weight with a Wean Ratio of 112, a Yearling Ratio of 116 and a Scrotal of 42. He had EPD's of CED of 8,

and a BW of 0.7, a WW of 64, a YW of 117, and a CEM of 7.

Taylor Land & Cattle from Amelia, NE took home another KG Justified 3023 son for \$13,000, JJA Justified 3177, Lot 17. The Sitz-Johnston herd used this bull as a yearling for AI cleanup. He had an actual birth weight of 78 pounds, a Wean Ratio of 100 and a Yearling Ratio of 110 with a 42 Scrotal measurement.

The dam is from the Proud Formera cow fam-

ily, having Sitz Dash, and Cole Creek Cedar Ridge 1V close up in her pedigree. Lot 17 had a EPD's of CED of 7, a BW 0.5, a WW of 73 and a YW of 133, a CEM of 0, Milk of 26.

The high selling sire groups were the KG Justified 3023 sons averaging \$9456, the second high-selling sire group were the LT Converse 8011 sons at \$9517 followed by Square B Atlantis 8060 at \$9083.

Mike Baxter, Ainsworth, was the auctioneer.

Pile Burning Began Feb. 10 at Bessey Ranger District

Pile burning at Nebraska National Forests and Grasslands began on Monday, February 10. The Fort Pierre National Grassland, Samuel R. McKelvie National Forest, and the Bessey Ranger District of the Nebraska National Forests and Grasslands begin burning hand and machine slash piles.

Piles are only ignited when managers are confident that the project can be undertaken safely with considerations to snow cover, wind, temperature, available staffing, and smoke dispersal. Public and firefighter safety is always the number one priority in all burning operations.

Firefighters continually monitor and check the piles for several days after they have been lit.

"It is very important to reduce fire and insect hazards by reducing fuel buildup," said Nathan Hanson, Nebraska National Forest East Zone Fuels Assistant Fire management Officer. "The piles are concentrations of leftover materials associated with previous vegetation management activities intended to remove hazardous fuels that can burn during summer wildfires."

Piles may smolder, burn and produce smoke for several days after ignition. While smoke may linger in the area, there is

a real benefit to burning this type of vegetation.

No closures are anticipated with these operations. however, if smoke drifts on to roads, motorists should slow down, turn on headlights, and proceed with care and watch for fire personnel and vehicles.

For more pile burning information and notifications, follow the Great Plains Fire Information page: <http://gpfireinfo.blogspot.com/>, Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NebraskaForests-Grasslands>.

For more information on the Nebraska National Forest and Grasslands, visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/nebraska>.

Thedford Public Schools - No School
Spring Break - March 7 and March 10

Thedford Service Club Elects officers

Thedford Service Club has elected new officers for the 2025 year. Cay Ewoldt will serve as president; Shannon Ahlstrom, vice president; Kelsey Jameson, treasurer; and Terri Licking, secretary. The group meets the first Monday of every month and dues letters are going out. Dues of \$100.00 are now payable. Your dues help promote Thedford events and activities.

Thedford Service Club and the Thomas County Ag Society are working on 2025 events. Fair dates are July 21 - 27.

Ultimate Bull Fighting with Flat Line Bulls by Josh Call will take place Saturday, July 26. Sponsorships are being taken at this time and more information may be obtained by contacting Steve and Shannon Ahlstrom.