

Area schools make ‘great’ list

The Nebraska Department of Education recently released statewide standardized test results, statewide ACT test results, and a new rating system for every school and district. This takes the place of the former school ranking system. After a three year hiatus the Department of Education has debuted their system of school accountability.

The new system, Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow, measures schools on test scores as well as six additional tenets: positive partnerships, relationships and successes; transitions; educational opportunities and access; college, career and civic ready; assessment; and educator effectiveness.

Through the accountability system, schools earned Excellent, Great, Good or Needs Improvement overall ratings.

This year, 156 Nebraska schools, or one out of seven, are rated as needing improvement. That is up from 87 in 2015.

Nearly three out of four schools across the state – 813 – are rated good or great.

The state gave 141 schools, or 12.7 percent, the top rating of excellent.

Nebraska Commissioner of Education Matt Blomstedt said parents shouldn’t be alarmed if their child’s school is labeled as need-

Area School Ratings

Excellent

Mullen

Great

Arnold Public Schools
Arthur County Schools
Hyannis Area Schools
McPherson County Schools
Sandhills Public Schools
Stapleton Public Schools

Good

Brady Public Schools
Broken Bow Public Schools
Callaway Public Schools
Thedford Public Schools

Needs Improvement

Maxwell Public Schools
Sargent Public Schools

ing improvement.

“It’s not a direct reflection on that individual student, but probably a reflection on the challenges that a school must overcome to continuously improve and get better,” Blomstedt said. “It doesn’t mean that the school’s bad, it means that there’s some room for some improvement.”

State officials will use the ratings to assist more low performing schools

beyond just the three priority schools the state is already helping – Loup County Elementary in Taylor, Santee Middle School in Niobrara, and Schuyler Central High School in Schuyler.

Local area school ratings show:

Excellent: Mullen
Great: Sandhills Public Schools, McPherson Co. Schools, Stapleton Public

See SCHOOLS Page 8

Cattlemen Ring In 2019



NCSA board members, l-r: Eric Schipporeit, Dan Wachter, Kelly Kennedy, Frank Utter, John Kraye, Tessa Quittner, Troy Saner, Adam Zutavern and Miles Munford.

Stories & Pictures
Terri Licking

Cattle producers are a hearty stock. They have to be, as they care for their animals when the snow, cold, and wind show no mercy. Having the wind and cold again on New Year’s Eve for the second annual Nebraska Cattlemen’s Sandhills Affiliate’s (NCSA) Winter Ball did not deter many from enjoying ringing in the New Year with friends. It had snowed in the morning, but not enough to worry about. It was warmer than last year – wind chill of twenty below versus thirty below.

The Hooker County Community Center on the fairgrounds west of Mullen hardly had an empty seat when it came time to sit and enjoy the tantalizing prime rib supper prepared by Gregg and Dawn Mallory of the Chuckwagon ‘N Jug. The meal was capped off by a

myriad of cheesecakes and fruit crisps. They also provided the cash bar that was a popular place.

Helping serve and cleanup were the FFA clubs from Sandhills High School at Dunning and Thedford High School.

“Our area has three high schools, so we alternate every year on which group helps. Last year, Mullen FFA benefitted,” said Tessa Quittner, Halsey, secretary of the NCSA.

Frank Utter, Brewster, NSCA president, welcomed the 175 in attendance. The evening is the major fundraiser for the group, helping provide scholarships to graduating seniors. In 2018 they awarded their first collegiate scholarship. Paige Martindale and Jaylee Simonson, who graduated in May from Sandhills High School, and Kelsey Phillips in her second year of college, were awarded scholarships. Each girl received \$1,000

NCSA scholarships.

Nebraska Cattlemen divides the state into nine regions. Region 2 includes the Sandhills Affiliate, Hyannis Affiliate, Bassett Affiliate and Valentine Cattlemen.

To assist in the funding, donors gave a variety of items for the silent auction. Several large items were live auctioned. A rifle was also raffled off this year.

NCSA seeks sponsorships from area businesses one time each year. These sponsorships help with the annual Winter Ball, the summer golf outing and steak supper at the Dismal River Golf Club in June, and the annual fall ranch tour. They have also provided hamburgers for blood donors during last year’s blood drives.

“We would love to give a big shout out to Western Nebraska Bank, Harsh Mercantile, Daniels Man-

See NCSA Page 2

Polar Bear tank race date set



COURTESY PHOTO

The Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway is excited to announce the upcoming 12th annual Polar Bear Tank Race. This unique fun-filled event will be held March 1st & 2nd, 2019, on the Middle Loup River north of Mullen. Teams of at least four members race down the river in metal stock tanks with winning teams determined by time. The event kicks off on Friday evening with team registration and a soup cook-off at the new Mullen Community Building located on the fairgrounds west of town. Soup entries from communities along the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway are

taste tested by tank racers and winners selected in the categories of taste, theme, and decorations. Communities and/or individuals are encouraged to enter the soup cook-off contest and help welcome Polar Bear Race teams to our area!

Tank race teams meet for breakfast on Saturday morning and load buses to be transported to the river where they are launched in a staggered draw order. There is even a race category for teams of women. For those teams wishing to enjoy a relaxing float down the river, a non-competitive category is also available.

A prime rib awards banquet will be held Saturday evening to conclude the event. The Polar Bear Tank Race offers a truly unique, out of the ordinary winter experience with teams coming from across Nebraska as well as several other states. Registration is on a first come basis so teams are encouraged to register early, as the number of team entries is limited. For more information and registration forms, please contact event organizer Mitch Glidden at 308-546-2206 or visit the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway website at www.sandhillsjourney.com.

Inside This Issue

- Happenings On The Hill
- Nebraska Timeline
- Over The Hills
- Odds & Ends

Notices

- Notice Of Organization Bar None Cattle Co LLC
- Quarterly Central Sandhills Area Extension Board Notice
- Notice Of Trustee’s Sale
- Village Of Thedford Board Proceedings
- Thomas County Semi-Annual Report

Index

Legal Notices.....	2
Community Calendar	2
Social Side	3
Opinion Page.....	4
Comics	4
Classifieds	5
Business Directory	5
Statewide Classifieds	5
School News	6
Calling All Babies	6
Sports.....	7
Booster Ad.....	7
Local News.....	8
Extension News.....	8

News Briefs Baby Section

Our newspaper’s special Valentine’s Day baby section will be published Feb. 14.

We are calling all babies! No matter where you live, if you were born in 2018, you can be featured in *The Stapleton Enterprise/McPherson County News* and *Thomas County Herald*.

Have your mom or dad grandparents, or any relative send us your picture and information. See more information on page 6 inside this issue.



The Thedford and Sandhills High School FFA students who helped with the NCSA Winter Ball are l-r: Jacy Hafer, Sandhills; Morgan Rines-tine, Thedford; Gavin Barela, Sandhills; Hannah Pearson, Thedford; Matthew Dailey, Sandhills; Madison Marten, Sandhills; Emily Martindale, Sandhills; Zack Bradley, Sandhills; Logan Hafer, Sandhills; Reece Zutavern, Sandhills; and Brea Branic, Sandhills.

Nebraska Rancher Panel to Discuss Generational Transition Planning at Upcoming Meeting

What happens if your family’s ranching or farming operation is unable to transfer to the next generation? Now is the time to start your transition! A meeting will be held at Broken Bow to help families navigate the common

landmines including legal, financial, and communication issues. Several respected Nebraska ranchers and farmers have agreed to share their experiences with generational transitions at upcoming meetings. Learn from this panel of producers, who have experienced transitions, each in their own way. The panel will dis-

cuss what worked and what did not work for their operations and families.

An experienced attorney will also cover helpful legal tools to transition your farm or ranch to the next generation. Pamela Olsen is an experienced estate planning attorney in the areas of estate and long-term care planning. Olsen will discuss succession and transition planning issues for farms and ranches. Sufficient time will allow for questions from the audience.

The meeting will be held from 10:00 A.M. CT until 2:30 P.M. CT on Tuesday,

February 12, 2019 at the Tumbleweed Cafe (meeting room) in Broken Bow, Nebraska.

The registration fee is \$15 and includes lunch. Walk-ins are welcome, but registrations are requested one week in advance for meal counts. You can register for the Broken Bow location by contacting Troy Walz, email – twalz1@unl.edu, call – 308-872-6831.

This meeting is sponsored by the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition, Nebraska Extension, the Nebraska Environmental Trust, and the World Wildlife Fund.