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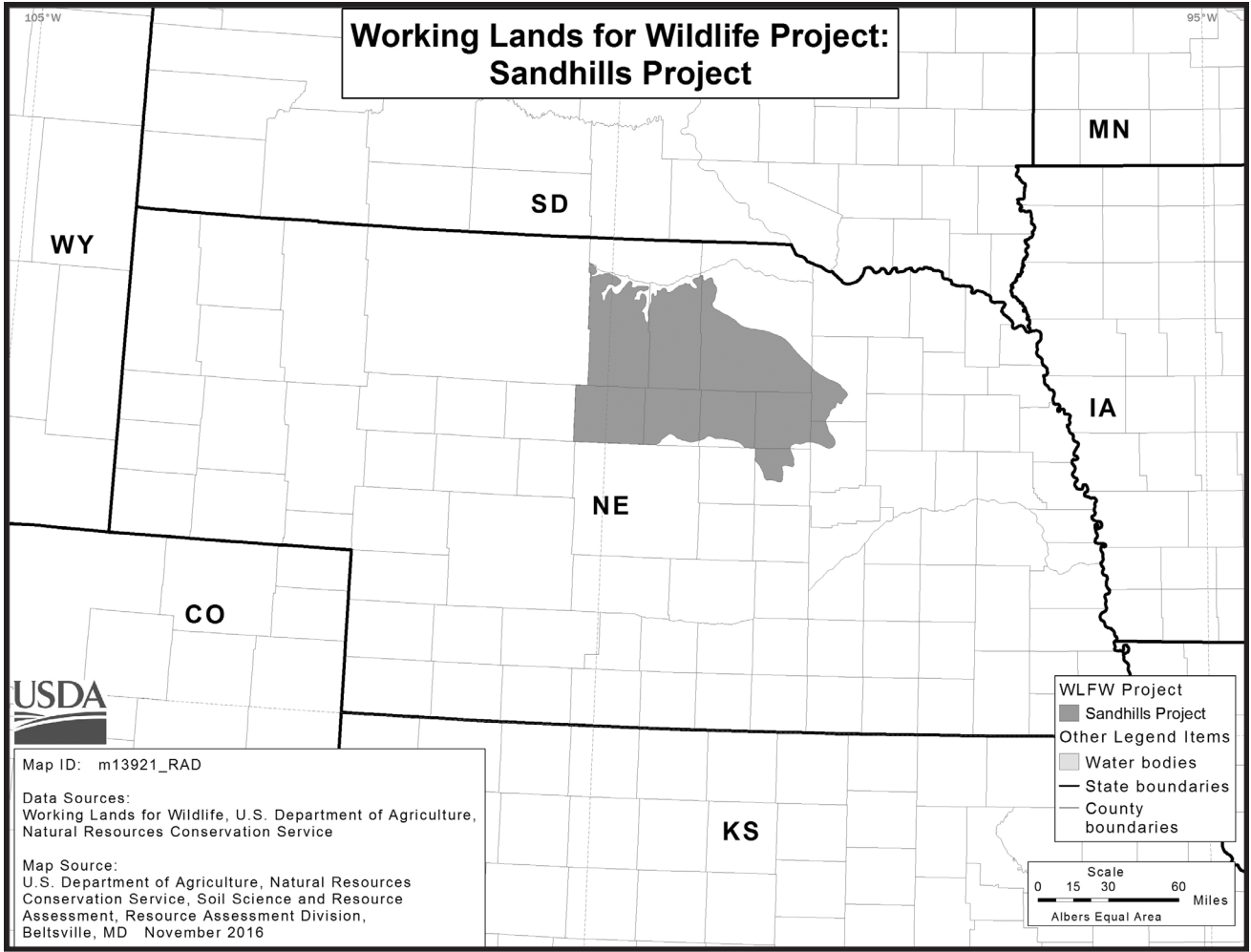
Custer County Sheriff's Office receives grant

The Custer County Sheriff's Office is being awarded a highway safety grant to assist in obtaining two mobile radar units. According to the Nebraska Department of Transportation, Highway Safety Office, Administrator Fred Zwonechek, "The Custer County Sheriff's Office has been awarded the funding to help prevent traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities at various locations in the area."

The mobile radar speed detection equipment provides the agency with a state-of-the-art system that will enhance speed control efforts. The Nebraska Department of Transportation, Highway Safety Office, has awarded \$1,800 to the Custer County Sheriff's Office toward the purchase of the new units.

"They should be commended for taking advantage of this funding assistance to equip their patrol units with the tools necessary to assure safer streets for the residents and visitors to Custer County," Zwonechek said. "Utilizing this equipment has demonstrated proven success at reducing traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities within the communities," he added.

Ranchers Invited to Informational Meeting About Rangeland Health Funding Available Through New Program



The eastern red cedar is a tree landowners have a love/hate relationship with. They love its hardy nature, but hate how quickly it can take over pastures reducing valuable grazing acres. As landowners in the Sandhills know, managing cedar trees takes dedication, and lots of time. The new Working Lands for Wildlife program can help.

Ranchers and landown-

ers are invited to learn more about the Working Lands for Wildlife program at an informational meeting on Feb. 13 from 9:30 A.M. until 2:30 P.M. at the Calamus Outfitters located at 83720 Valleyview Ave., Burwell.

This event will share information on how the Working Lands for Wildlife program provides funding to help landowners manage invasive eastern red cedars,

install planned grazing systems and improve wildlife habitat. To register, visit www.SandhillsTaskForce.org or call/text Shelly Kelly at (308) 214-0065. Registration is free of charge for ranchers and landowners, but pre-registration is required since lunch will be provided.

The Working Lands for Wildlife program is available through the USDA Natural Resources Con-

servation Service (NRCS). The program dedicates funding to 10 counties in the Sandhills (see map) to help landowners manage eastern red cedar trees through grazing management, mechanical removal and conducting controlled burns. Funding is also available to install grazing systems, which help improve grassland health and wildlife habitat.

NRCS is working with the Sandhills Task Force, Nebraska Cattlemen, and many other conservation agency partners through this program to help ranchers in the eastern Sandhills increase rangeland health. A healthier

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American Legion Auxiliary Meets With Six Present

American Legion Auxiliary Steidley-Kayton Unit #230 met January 8, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. with six members present.

Minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. The treasurer's report was given and the beginning balance was \$1,674.81. The CD total was \$3,011.47 and \$553.

All but two members have paid. Brenda Buechler has been working on contacting members and is doing a great job.

Correspondence was received about the mid-winter meeting in North Platte, January 12-14. Each unit needs to supply two door prizes. We will offer to send money for this as well as sending our activities

Vada Haumann presented a letter from Helen White Leaf about her husband. They are working on an article that will be in the Star.

Membership dues were raised to \$25.00/year. Unit

portion \$2.75, state \$10.25 and national \$12.00. No membership raise for Junior dues. They will stay at \$5.00/year. Unit portion .75, state \$1.25, and national \$3.00.

Jeanne Blackford is leaving 47 small flags and 29 stands made by Alan Haumann for Kindergartners at Veterans Day programs.

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting will be on February 12, 2018.

USDA Provides Funding to Increase Access to Educational and Health Care Services in Rural Areas

Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett today announced that USDA is awarding grants for broadband projects to increase access to job training, educational and health care services in rural areas in 35 states. In Nebraska, Southeast Community College is receiving \$120,582 to help create a distance learning program.

Southeast Community College's (SCC) campuses in Lincoln, Milford and Beatrice will act as hubs and will connect to learning centers in Hebron, Plattsmouth and Falls City. Distance learning will focus on health care education and continuing education. The project will benefit rural communities by allowing SCC to increase capacity and provide more distance learning courses.

"Broadband technology helps provide career opportunities and deliver critical medical services to rural residents," Hazlett said. "It allows rural hospitals to better diagnose and treat patients. It helps treat people who are struggling with opioid and other substance use disorders. It also helps bring jobs to rural areas."

USDA is awarding 72 grants totaling \$23.6 mil-

Road opens to south side of Chat Canyon WMA

The Nebraska National Forest has opened a road in Cherry County to motor vehicles, improving access to an area of Chat Canyon Wildlife Management Area that lies south of the Niobrara River.

The road is an existing two-track trail through the Samuel L. McKelvie Forest south of Chat Canyon WMA that was previously open to the public for only non-motorized use. It is one-half mile long, providing a link from Forest Service Road 603 to a quarter-mile easement over private property leading to the WMA.

Previously, the lower portion of the WMA was locked in by this property on the south and the Niobrara River to the north. The only direct motor vehicle access to Chat Canyon WMA was by a county road north of the river.

"This opens a large portion of the WMA that was previously accessible only by walking in or horseback riding from more than a half-mile away," said Tom Krolikowski, a Nebraska Game and Parks Commission land manager in Valentine. "We appreciate the Forest Service making this change to serve hunters and other recreational enthusiasts to enjoy this area."

Krolikowski said the opening of the road will be especially helpful for young hunters and their mentors.

Chat Canyon WMA consists of 456 acres open to the public and restricted to youth hunting and to elk hunters. Located along a scenic portion of the river, it has prime habitat for deer, elk, turkey, waterfowl and many other game species. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission purchased the property in 2013.

lion through the Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program. This program funds equipment that uses broadband to help rural communities connect to advanced learning and specialized medical services.

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community services such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov.

In Nebraska contact General Field Representative Roger Meeks at 402-416-4936 or roger.meeks@wdc.usda.gov

Correction

In the story about the Upper Loup Natural Resource District Board of Directors, it was mistakenly reported that candidates need to file with their county clerk. They need to file with the Nebraska Secretary of State. This can also be done online. For more information you may call 308-645-2250.

Hoffman Part Owner of Champion Winter Bull Calf At NWSS



PHOTO BY CHRIS JEFFCOAT, AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION

WB Pendleton 708 PVF SWSN won winter bull calf champion honors at the 2018 National Western Stock Show Super Point Roll of Victory (ROV) Angus Show, Jan. 10-12 in Denver, Colorado. Carter Ward, Plattsburg, Missouri, and Hoffman Ranch, Thedford, own the winning bull.