

THOMAS COUNTY

Herald

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News In The Sandhills

THOMAS COUNTY, THEDFORD, NEBRASKA 69166

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“Western Gothic” will have permanent home in Thedford



COURTESY PHOTO

“Western Gothic,” will be returning to Thedford. The Thomas County Visitor’s Committee has purchased the heart designed and painted by Roberta Barnes of Halsey for \$10,000. It was the top selling heart at the auction held October 6 at Haymarket Park in Lincoln. Pictured at left are Trina and Jeff Goeden of Raymond and Twyla and Tom Witt. At right are Roberta and Randy Barnes and Brad and Anne Nutter.

For Roberta Barnes of Halsey it was hard to believe that her “Western Gothic - Big Skies, Big Hearts,” would be coming back to Thedford.

It was almost beyond words as Barnes described the auction that had just taken place Friday, October 6, at Haymarket Park in Lincoln.

Although the Nebraska by Heart committee had commissioned her to do a heart honoring Clayton Anderson, the first Nebraska astronaut, it was the heart she had done to honor the big-hearted people of the Sandhills that topped the auction at \$10,000. The Thomas County Visitor’s Committee purchased the heart and Twyla Witt said it is now being displayed at Roadside Inn at Thedford for the time being.

“We will be looking for a permanent location for the heart,” Witt said.

Barnes said the journey began when proposals were made by the Nebraska by Hearts committee requesting a heart be created for each of Nebraska’s 93 counties in the state.

“Mostly eastern artists responded and I decided that we needed something to represent this part of our state - the Sandhills,” Barnes said. “After processing and thinking about what I wanted to create I decided on a take of American Gothic, and do a heart based on the husband and wife

team who work together on ranches every day.”

Western Gothic, a 6’ fiberglass heart, depicts a husband and wife saddling up to begin their day’s work,

Barnes went on to say she was overwhelmed by those in the area who supported her in her efforts. She said she had the big hearted people of the Sandhills in mind when she went to work on this project.

Proceeds from the auction were split between the artists and the two sponsoring organizations - Lead Up and Sadie Dog Fund.

Barnes also helped with “Solomon Butcher,” and this heart will be going back to Broken Bow. Rick and Dawn Sebek purchased the heart for \$1,600 and they are donating it back to the city.

“Pieces of Nebraska,” designed by last year’s Broken Bow High School art student, Abby Olson, and painted by the Broken Bow Art Club, will also be going back to Broken Bow.

“Dreams Become Destiny,” was the 83rd heart sculpture in the project. Barnes said the heart honoring Anderson featured juxtaposed images of a Nebraska field and a rocket soaring above, “reminding us that we possess both roots and wings.” The generations of tradition that bind us to the Earth have also prepared us to soar above it.



COURTESY PHOTO

Artist, Roberta Barnes, poses with Nebraska’s first astronaut, Clayton Anderson, with the “Dreams Become Destiny,” Barnes was commissioned to do this heart honoring Anderson by the Nebraska by Heart committee.

Thomas County Receives Dividend Check

Thomas County has received another membership dividend, this time in the amount of \$3,090, from the Nebraska Inter-governmental Risk Management Association (NIRMA), the county’s property, liability and workers’ compensation coverage and risk management services provider. The dividend was part of a \$1.25 million distribution shared with 79 Nebraska counties and six regional area agencies on aging during NIRMA’s annual membership conference Oct. 5-6 in Kearney.

With this latest distribution, Thomas County has now received a total of \$55,526 in dividends since becoming a member of NIRMA in 1989. NIRMA is able to issue these dividends, in part, due to favorable claims development, investment income earned on behalf of its membership, as well as the members’ ongoing loss prevention efforts.

NIRMA is owned and



COURTESY PHOTO

Thomas County Sheriff, Gary Eng, right, accepts a check in the amount of \$3,090 for Thomas County.

governed by the 81 member counties and 11 county-associated public entities it serves. This marks the 29th time since 1991 and the 22nd consecutive year the program has been able to return funds, now totaling nearly \$20 million, to its members and ultimately their local property taxpayers.

NIRMA was created by 32 counties in 1988 as the state’s first governmental risk management and self-insurance program, and for the past 29 years it has provided affordable insurance coverages and comprehensive risk management and loss prevention services to Nebraska counties and related public agencies.

Comment time extended on transmission line

Information Question & Answer Session Rescheduled in Thedford

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service will host an informal question and answer session about the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and supporting draft documents for NPPD’s 225-mile-long R-Project transmission line on Wednesday, October 25, at the Thomas County Fairgrounds Building in Thedford. This is a rescheduled meeting from October 11.

The session will run from 6:00 until 9:00 p.m. and the purpose will be to provide a forum for the public to ask questions and seek clarification about the content of the DEIS and other supporting documents prior to the close of the public comment period on November 7.

If you wish to submit comments during the public comment period, please visit [www.regula-](http://www.regula-tions.gov)

tions.gov.

Comments will also be accepted via U.S. mail or hand delivery to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 9325 South Alda Road, Wood River, NE 68885.

Federal officials reopened the time for people to comment on the controversial transmission line through the Nebraska Sandhills.

The R-Project is a 225-mile long transmission line the Nebraska Public Power District wants to build from the Gerald Gentleman power plant near Sutherland north to Thedford, then east to Clearwater.

NPPD says the line will alleviate congestion, increase reliability, and allow for wind power development.

Opponents say construction will tear up the fragile landscape, and the line and wind farms will de-

stroy unspoiled vistas.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has to decide whether to give NPPD a permit because construction will likely kill or harm some American Burying Beetles, an endangered species, and other protected wildlife.

The public comment period was originally supposed to end July 11, but now it will end on Nov. 7. Fish and Wildlife Biologist Bob Harms said this will give people more time to read and react to nearly 1,500 pages of technical reports.

“People were having difficulty even accessing it on the internet. They were interested in reviewing the document, but they couldn’t get to it,” Harms said.

For a complete story see page 8 of the special Preserve the Sandhills section inside this issue.

Dailey places in Invitational

Megan Vrbka of Staplehurst was the overall champion of the Nebraska Youth Smallbore Silhouette Invitational this year hitting 34 of 40 targets. The event took place September 30 at Pressey Wildlife Management Area south of Broken Bow.

Vrbka was followed by High Boy James Simpson of Wayne and High Girl Rebekah Pobanz of Grand Island, who each hit 31 targets.

The 73 competitors fired

40 rounds of .22 caliber ammunition with a rifle unsupported and off hand at steel silhouette targets. Each shot 10 shots at targets that were 43, 66, 84 and 109 yards in distance. The annual event is open to all Hunter Education graduates who are at least 11 years old and have not graduated high school.

The overall team championship went to the 10X 4-H team from Seward for the second year in a row. Team members are

Vrbka, Zachary Schluckebier, Cabe Schluckebier and Braden Hiser.

Matthew Dailey of Thedford placed second in the Light Rifle with Iron Sight individual division.

He was a member of the Western Nebraska Shooting Sports team that took first in the open division. Dailey and teammates Nate Fahrenbrook, Danilka Bohle, and Austin Rahmig shot 94 of 160.

He is the son of Lemoyne and Rhonda Dailey of Thedford.

R-Calf schedules two area meetings

Bill Bullard, R-CALF CEO and Tatum Lee, R-CALF Development Director, will be in Nebraska next week having two meetings.

They will be in Valentine, Thursday, October 19, at 7:00 p.m. at the Peppermill. There will be a rollover auction benefiting R-CALF USA with a calf donated by Kenny and Roxie Fox. The meeting will follow.

Bill Bullard will speak Friday, October 20 at Uncle Buck’s in Brewster at 7:00 p.m. A potluck supper will begin at 6:00 p.m. with the meat provided. Please bring a side or a dessert.

“Come learn about the Global Roundtable For Sustainable Beef and what R-CALF USA is doing to defend your interests...”

Index

Legal Page	2
Community	
Calendar	2
Social Side	3
Opinion Page.....	4
Comics	4
Classified Page.....	5
Business Directory	5
School News	6
Thedford & Sandhills	
School Lunch Menus ..	6
Sports	7
Obituary	8

Inside This Issue

- L.J.’s Column
- Over The Hills
- Happenings On The Hill
- Life’s Outtakes
- Odds & Ends
- Pelster Column
- Life’s Outtakes
- Sandhills & Thedford
- School Activities
- Range Judging Results
- Volleyball, Football & Cross Country Results

Notices

- Notice To Contractors
- Notice Of Organization Licking Ag, LLC
- Central Sandhills Extension Board Public Notice
- Notice Of Organization Licking, LLC
- Notice Or Organization Of J.A.C. Feed, L.L.C.
- Notice Of Thomas Co. School Land Lease Sale