

Caution - Cattle Crossing

Story & Picture
Terri Licking

Photos like this are representative of cattle producers who drive their cows home from cornstalks this time of year.

This is easier on the cows that are a month or so from calving, but finding a good weather day has been difficult. This drive could be seen Saturday afternoon, February 9, on the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway. One does not often have the luxury of capturing hard working cattle producers on bitter cold days.

Thanks goes out to Kim and Denise Woodward of Broken Bow.

Denise Woodward, who was in the pickup with a trailer bringing up the rear, said their 80 plus cows did pretty well considering it was an eight mile trek. The trailer would be used to bring the horses home.

"When we came to the curve before the tracks, we had probably gone two miles. Melody Doss and her daughter were in the lead feed pickup with a hay bale - a coxer most cows follow this time of



Pictured on horseback are, l-r: Kim Woodward, Drake Doss and Dakota Doss. Denise Woodward brought up the rear with the pickup and horse trailer.

year."

On horseback was Denise's husband Kim, and the Doss men, Melody's husband, Dakota and their son, Drake.

Care was taken to ensure everyone's safety.

A deputy from the sheriff's department was on hand, BNSF had been contacted, a wait on two trains to pass caused delay for highway traffic.

"Ice on the gravel road

was another problem after the tracks."

Cows falling on ice can induce early labor, thus lost revenue. When they turned on the Paulsen road, passing KinKaider's, Denise said there was a party in progress, so a lot of onlookers with their phones took pictures of the cattle drive.

Denise probably got the most exercise, running up and down the line of cars

on the highway a couple of times, thanking them for their patience and understanding, and explaining the delay.

The Woodwards want to thank the travelers who were patient and understanding throughout. Patience is not simply the ability to wait - it's how we behave while we're waiting - (Author unknown).

Most behaved admirably she said.

R-Project powerline is nearing decision point

By State Senator
Tom Brewer

The federal government approval of NPPD's "R-Project" powerline is nearing a decision point. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project has been on the Federal Register since the 8th of February and is nearing the end of its 30 day waiting period. After which, a "final record of decision" is soon to follow. This gives NPPD the green-light to begin construction of the powerline.

The problem with all this is they have not and are not following the federal law (Endangered Species Act). In spite of the shiny new R-Project sales brochure handed out by NPPD at the capitol today, they continue to show a complete disregard for the countless concerns raised by the public. The route of the R-Project has not changed an inch.

If one drills down into this 837 page document, you will find Appendix E which concerns the Whooping Crane. The highly technical computations discussed in this appendix attempt to answer the question of "mortality." Specifically, how many Whooping Cranes do the US Fish & Wildlife biologists think will be killed by collisions with this power line over the 50 year life of the project? Remember, only 505 of these animals remain.

The data used to answer this question is old and sparse, and the calculation method used was designed to deliberately skew the result to as near "zero" as was mathematically possible. A large amount of new, modern data were found in early 2018, but the chapter on "threatened and endangered species" was closed by that point and the new

data was not considered in the EIS. This violates the Endangered Species Act which requires the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) use "the best available science." As it is, they are deliberately ignoring it, and so is NPPD.

As a result of a Department of Interior Inspector General's Complaint I filed, analysis of the new data was eventually forced to happen by the USFWS Scientific Integrity Officer, and is now part of the public record. In an effort, I believe, to deliberately discredit the data, the biologists in the Denver USFWS office wrote an incomplete rebuttal of the analysis and it is rife with errors. I'm shocked this actually made it into the public record. They did this, I believe, because an honest appraisal of the best data available shows a shocking Whooping Crane mortality rate.

The law provides a remedy for all of this called a "Supplemental Environmental Impact Study." This new Whooping Crane data could be properly studied and a scientifically sound report, free of bias could be rendered. It's the right thing to do. Sadly, NPPD steadfastly refuses to do this. On the advice of NPPD's paid lobbyist in Denver, the US Fish & Wildlife Service also steadfastly refuse to do this. Other members of Nebraska's congressional delegation have joined me in this fight. We will soon see if the Department of Interior agrees with the corruption surrounding the R Project.

Please contact my office with any comments, questions or concerns. Email me at; tbrewer@leg.ne.gov. Mail a letter to; Sen. Tom Brewer, Room #1423, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509 or call us at (402) 471-2628.

Town Hall Meeting with Sen. Brewer

The Thomas, Blaine, and Loup County Farm Bureaus will host a town hall meeting with Sen. Tom Brewer of District 43. The town hall meeting will take place Friday, March 8, at 4 p.m. at Uncle Bucks Lodge in Brewster. The meeting is free and open to the public.

Sen. Brewer will answer questions from constituents and give an update on his work at the Legislature and what to expect during the upcoming legislative session. The meeting will also allow District 43 con-

stituents to meet and visit personally with Sen. Brewer.

"We are excited to hold a town hall meeting for Sen. Brewer and the constituents in District 43," said Katherine Kubacki, president of Thomas County Farm Bureau. "The town hall meeting will allow citizens to ask questions that matter to them and hear responses from Sen. Brewer."

For more information you may contact Tammy Fiechtner, North Central regional manager, Nebraska Farm Bureau, (402) 502-9494.

Hundreds of stranded motorists

The Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) and Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) closed Interstate 80, Saturday, February 23, due to numerous crashes and white out conditions in the eastern half of the state. I-80 was closed between mile marker 312, near Grand Island, and mile marker 439, near Gretna.

Troopers responded to numerous crashes, including large crashes at mile markers 329, 355, and 409 on Interstate 80. Some of those crashes in-

volved injuries.

The first large crash occurred near mile marker 355, east of York, involving an estimated 30 vehicles, including at least 15 semis. The crash occurred at approximately 2:45 p.m. More than 100 vehicles became stranded behind that crash.

At approximately 3:10 p.m. a crash occurred at mile marker 329, near Aurora. That crash involved approximately 15 vehicles, including 10 semis.

See Stranded Page 7

Service Club to host meeting

The Thedford Service Club will be hosting a meeting with Ansley community members who have used innovative ways to enhance their community from successful balloting for sales tax to sales of village lots to get them back on the tax roll. A low income housing company now calls Ansley home. Learn how they are living their motto "Some Bigger, None Better."

The meeting will be held Tuesday, March 5th with a Dutch treat meal at 6:00 p.m. (CT) followed by the meeting at 7:00 p.m. CT in the east room of the Sandhills Corral café in Thedford.

The Public is welcome. RSVP for the meal to Sandhills Corral at 308-645-2323.

Free summer camp for Thomas County youth



SULLIVAN HILLS CAMP

Sullivan Hills Camp is in its 22nd year, but for the first time, Thomas County kids will be able to attend for free. Donors have subsidized the entire cost of camp this year to make sure every child has the opportunity to attend.

First through twelfth graders spend a week developing great friendships, growing self-confidence, and deepening their faith at this 640-acre residential summer camp near Lodgepole, Nebraska. Each week through June and July, trained Summer Ministry Team members lead kids through activities such as a high ropes challenge course, archery, boating,

Bible study, creative arts, and many other classic camp activities.

Registrations are now open at SullivanHills.org or by calling 402-944-2544. A \$50 deposit is required at registration; it will be refunded after the child attends camp.

Yearly Management Of Noxious Weeds Important



The legal description of a noxious weed is any plant designated by a Federal, State or county government as injurious to public health, agriculture, recreation, wildlife or property. More commonly they are defined as a plant that grows out of place and is competitive, persistent, and pernicious.

Regardless of which weed you are trying to manage it's important to continue yearly management. Skipping a year can cause the noxious weed to re-infest rapidly. Persistence is the key to any successful weed control program.

In Nebraska you are legally required to control noxious weeds on your

property. The common noxious weeds on the Nebraska State list include: plumeless thistle, musk thistle, diffuse knapweed, spotted knapweed, Canada thistle, leafy spurge, purple loosestrife and saltcedar. Fortunately, not all of these weeds are found in our District. To help with the battle with those found in our area (leafy spurge, Canada thistle, musk thistle) the Upper Loup Natural Resources District provides cost share funds for BOTH fall and spring treatment to landowners in the NRD area. Funds are available to cover 50% of the cost of approved chemicals up to \$500 per landowner.

Notices

- Upper Loup NRD Notice Of Public Hearing
- Thedford School Board Proceedings
- Village Of Thedford Regular Meeting Proceedings
- Village Of Thedford Emergency Meeting Proceedings
- Thomas County Board Of Commissioners' Proceedings
- Thomas County Planning Commission Notice Of Hearing

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- Bernard Douglas Leshner

News Briefs

The Sandhills-Thedford Junior-Senior Prom will be held Saturday, March 30 at the NE National Forest in Halsey.