

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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Arnold Junior Gives Testimony at Hearing In Support of LB 281

By Janet Larreau

With her parents by her side, Delaney Rogers walked into the state capital on February 15 to have her voice heard. The 17-year-old A.H.S. Junior was there to give her testimony supporting LB281 – a bill that if approved would appropriate up to \$30 million for the building or renovation of youth outdoor education facilities with a preference for those compromised by natural or manmade disaster. In this case, the preference for many of the supporters who attended is the Halsey 4-H Camp that was destroyed in the Bovee fire on October 2, 2022.

“It had been a place with a lot of great childhood memories,” said Delaney. “My Dad read the article in the paper about the hearing and I knew I wanted to at least submit a statement online. Since we were already headed to Omaha to support Dawson Doggett at state wrestling, my Dad suggested that we go down a couple hours early and actually go to the hearing. I received so much encouragement from my parents, the community, and of course Mrs. Badgley and my teachers at APS.”

The hearing started at 1:30 p.m. and Delaney, a Logan

County resident, gave her testimony at around 3:15 p.m. to the six senators in attendance.

After introducing herself, Delaney said, “I’m here to represent the younger generation who are Halsey Strong. Halsey National Forest and the 4-H campgrounds means the absolute world to me. I could see the fire that took in the skyline from my window. The smoke was hanging in the air for what seemed like a month. It broke my heart to hear that the place where my father, myself, and where I imagined my children to go to camp, had vanished in a puff of smoke.”

Delaney went on to say that she was one of the last to enjoy the camp. She was there for 10 days in a row at two different leadership camps in late July of 2022.

“I was one of the last to walk from the cabins to the lodge, or from the lodge to the observation deck. It was my home away from home. For me and my friends, it was like a death. I remember dropping to the floor in tears and calling my camp friends right away,” she said. “As soon as I picked myself up off the floor, I knew I had to help out. I went to everyone of my leadership activities and we as a whole decided to sell t-shirts to hopefully raise money to help in anyway possible. The



Photo/Grant Winterer, Sandhills Express

Arnold Junior Delaney Rogers gives her testimony before a group of Nebraska senators at the State Capital on February 15. Her topic was on how the camp has affected so many lives in a positive way, and if rebuilt, will continue to do so.

back of the shirts have a quote that says “Leaders aren’t born, their grown.” I couldn’t think of a better quote to describe the Halsey 4-H camp. Leaders are grown and have been grown for generations at the camp. We raised \$563, and that may not sound like a lot, but for a group of teenagers just trying to save something they’re passionate about, it was enough just to get people invested and in the know about the rebuilding process. This campground has affected so many kids and parents in Nebraska. Whether it’s

from going to the actual 4-H camps. I could list camps and activities for days, but I was told I only have 3 or 4 minutes. The east side of the state has many places to go to learn to be a leader, but the western side had Halsey.

“If you take away anything from this testimony, I hope that it’s the fact that so many kids have benefited from the Halsey 4-H camp and campgrounds. We cannot deprive our younger generations from the chance to learn and grow in the middle of a forest in the middle of the great grass desert. This camp has not only grown me as a leader and as a person, but it has grown so many of my classmates, teammates, and statewide peers as well.”

After Delaney spoke, the senators asked her questions about what she would do to make the

camp better and if she thought kids her age should be included in the rebuilding process. One senator asked her what she would like to “recapture” when rebuilding. Her response was the rustic feel that both she and her Dad knew and to not change a thing. The senators also mentioned that they had held some mock hearings for a group of high schoolers, but most of the time, it’s a sight to see a 17-year-old at the hearings.

“There were quite a few who had never seen the camp, but also many of them had been there as a kid and so had their kids,” she said. “I really hope I made a difference, but I don’t think I’ll ever truly know for sure. It’s enough for me to know I did everything I possibly could.”



Photo/Joel Morgan

Shop students and their instructor were taping drywall in the weight room last week as part of a large project to update the gym headed by Junior Rio Remund. The space is known to alumni as the “old gym.”

Student-Led Updates Being Made to Weight Room

Board votes to proceed with purchase of new equipment.

Three Arnold students attended the February 14th school board meeting to present project and fundraising ideas. Junior Rio Remund has been working on the largest project of completely updating the weight room, which is now located in the old gym. He spoke to the Board in January and returned on Tuesday night with updated pricing and funds that have been committed from the Arnold Booster Club and the Arnold Community Foundation fund. Rio has also submitted grant applications for the project. Later in the meeting, Board members voted to move forward with ordering new weight room equipment and to keep ordering as more funds are secured. The project – including new rubber flooring and drywall work – will be completed this spring.

Junior Honor Society member Eli Rogers, along with sponsor Debby Moninger, spoke about their idea of having a “Break the Day” at the school as a fundraiser and to bring aware-

ness to the Youth Rotary Interact project of bringing Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library to the area. All proceeds will go towards the book gifting program that mails free books to children from birth until they begin school in participating areas.

National Honor Society member Bryn Schwarz presented the organization’s project to purchase color coded t-shirts for elementary students by grade level for field day – an event that NHS organizes each year.

“A couple of teachers used color coding to keep track of their kids on field trips and it would be fun for field day. Board members thought it was a good idea,” said Superintendent Joel Morgan.

NHS will move forward with ordering the t-shirts for this spring’s field day. More discussion will be held on whether or not to buy t-shirts every year and to also use them for field trips. NHS will figure out the funding.

In action items, the Board voted to purchase a 40”x60” video board that will be paired with the new track timing system. The board will be facing the grandstands and results will come across the board. Mr. Morgan said this is a key piece of the track timing system and can be brought indoors for fall and winter sports. SORC and private donations covered the vast majority of the cost, with about only \$2,000.00 coming from the school. Mr. Morgan said the school would be able to recoup that cost when renting out the timing system for MNAC and other meets.

Board members approved the Navitas Building Evaluation that was presented last month. The evaluation looks specifically at facilities and their efficiency. The school will move forward through the audit, which will give an overall feeling of the current state of electrical and HVAC systems, windows, and insulation.

Community Survey, Clean-Up Discussed at Board Meeting

Village Board members heard some good news from AEDC Director Cheryl Carson at their regular meeting held on February 13. After the deadline for two separate surveys was moved from January 23 to February 10, many more residents took the time to fill them out. As of the deadline, 117 community opinion surveys and 47 workforce housing needs surveys were submitted.

Later, Carson mentioned that community participation in surveys is important for decisions on future projects and in applying for grants and will be used at different levels.

“If we don’t have a good number in ratio to actual population, it’s hard to obtain a good study that really reflects what the people are thinking and saying. It gives us insight of what the current climate in our community is right now,” she said. “If we ask for a certain thing when applying for grants, it says that yes, our community does want that.”

Resolution in support of all-fiber network

Great Plains Communications Sr. District Manager Ian Taylor attended the meeting asking for the Board’s support of GPC applying for a grant that would allow the company to construct and operate an all-fiber network and to provide affordable and high-quality broadband and voice services to all residents in Arnold. Board members then voted to pass a resolution in support of the grant application. The grant became available in 2022, when the Nebraska Legislature passed legislation allocating \$80 million for the Capital Projects Fund broadband grant program administered by the Nebraska Public Service Commission.

Proposed Project

A.H.S. student and Interact Club member Ethan Furne asked for approval to put three

aerating fountains at the Arnold Recreation Area to help control the algae and to provide oxidation for the fish. Ethan said that he has applied for several grants for the project. The Village would be responsible for the electricity and basic maintenance. Board members voted to approve the project and asked Ethan to coordinate the project with the Village superintendent.

Later in the meeting, Doug DeLaune asked the Board to consider purchasing a boat and trailer for the ARA to be used for lake maintenance. Members voted to authorize DeLaune to purchase a boat and a trailer up to \$1,500.00.

Clean-Up Month/ Nuisance Enforcement

The Board designated the months of April and May as Community Clean Up Months. The Village will provide a roll off container at no charge for both months. The next agenda item was consideration of nuisance enforcement/property clean up/unlicensed vehicles or inoperable. Jason Jenkins and Aaron Olson will talk to various individuals to encourage them to take advantage of the roll off container and to use this time to clean up the property. Chairman Glen Bowers said that if the property is not cleaned up during April and May, then the Board will proceed with nuisance enforcement.

Chili Cook-Off Is Saturday

Eight teams will be cooking up their secret recipes at the 34th Annual Chili Cook-Off this Saturday, February 25. Public serving of contestants’ chili, potato and chicken-noodle soup will be from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the community center. Awards will be presented from 7:00 to 7:15 p.m. B.J. Jamison will provide entertainment.