

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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A Need Fulfilled

A-1 Auto announces winner in car give-away



Josh and Megan Bernt, owners of A-1 Auto Repair, handed over the keys to a pre-owned 2013 Dodge Dart to Arnold resident Darci Barnes (center, with daughters Anna and Ivy), on December 23. Darci received multiple nominations in the car-giveaway sponsored by the Bernts. - Debbie Connelly photos

By Janet Larreau

On Monday, December 23, Darci (Mills) Barnes' eyes were filled with tears, as local business owner Josh Bernt handed her

the keys to a 2013 Dodge Dart. With a skip in their step, she and twin daughters Anna and Ivy hopped in the new-to-them ride, and checked it all out. For this small Arnold family, Monday's events rang in a

season of joy and hope for better things in the coming year. Darci received multiple nominations in A-1 Auto Repair and A-1 Auto Truck Sales 2024 car give-away. The single mom was

in desperate need of a reliable vehicle. "I didn't pick up when I received the call. I listened to the voice message over and over and cried in disbelief," she said. Darci, who is employed



Darci is all smiles, as she checks out her new ride.

full-time as a CNA in a health care facility 24 miles from home, and has been recognized for her caring nature and reliability, needs dependable wheels to make ends meet. There have also been serious health challenges this year with both Darci and her mom when transportation was desperately needed to travel to Omaha. In their nomination letter, one person wrote, "Until recently, there were two older vehicles. Both are inoperable and waiting for repairs – costly repairs – that cannot be afforded at this time. She borrows her mother's older car to get to work. She and her family are doing their best to make do, but

with the health issues, the needs of two teenage daughters at home, and the challenge of repairing two older vehicles, she definitely is a candidate for your car give-away." Although the Bernts received the nominations, a third party selected the winner. Josh, who replaced the engine and did front-end work in the clean, pre-owned car, said, "I was thinking of different ways to give back during this season and decided that this would be a good way to give back to the community that has supported us. It was a heartwarming feeling to see her look when I handed over the keys."

2024: the Year In Review

As we look back at front page stories in the year 2024, community projects were the main focus – some continuing, some completed, and some popping up. Many grants were awarded, and as always, residents of not only the town, but the district as a whole, showed its support with donations and volunteer man hours. Now we have moved into 2025, and we look forward to continued coverage of both short- and long-term projects and the people and organizations that makes Arnold stand out from all the rest. Following is our annual year in review:

JANUARY: Construction phases began on the Arnold Area Historical Museum's Cornerstone Project, when a volunteer crew led by Justin Strasburg cleaned out the basement of the old Archie's Cafe building. A Chuck-A-Duck contest in the school gym raised \$250.00 for the local Team-Mates program. Tonya Welch signed a contract to bring a full

music program back to Arnold Schools. A small Arnold Area Historical Museum committee was capturing interviews with local historians to place on the AAHM's future website, and was receiving artifacts to preserve the area's rich history. Arnold seniors were deciding on a career path by participating in internships with local and area businesses. A blast of arctic air cancelled most everything in town, with lows dropping down to 14-15 below zero for three straight days. Village Board members learned that the community center floor was a total loss due to water getting under the floor. **FEBRUARY:** The high school science class was testing their own DNA with the school's gel electrophoresis machine – one of only a few in the state available to students. Chamber announced its officers for the coming year: April Tickle,

president; Dena Mills, vice-president; Tammy Weinman, secretary; and Becky Dailey, treasurer. Arnold Public Schools passed the sniff test, when Vader, the county's detection dog, paid a visit. The village board decided to pursue the hiring of a code enforcement officer at a special meeting. Residents were encouraged to give their input, as the USPS began its review of North Platte's Processing & Distribution Center. Lana Cool was among recipients of the 2023-2024 Nebraska School Activities Association Champions for Coaches award for leading Arnold's play production to four consecutive state championships. It was reported that Arnold's high-speed internet fiber project was about half-way there. The Custer County Foundation awarded the South Loup Youth football program a \$1,000.00 grant to upgrade equipment, and Arnold's Little League \$5,000.00 to help purchase



(From left) Peg Scott, Kenny Goodenow Jr., Mary Becker and (not pictured) Linda Olson were appointed to the re-formed Arnold Tree Board early this year and in just a few short months, made great strides in accomplishing their goals. Several organizations and boards worked on community projects – always with an eye on the future. - Debbie Connelly photo

a batting cage and pitching machine. The village board approved Arnold Little League's mission to revamp Old Mill Park by constructing bathrooms and putting in batting cages. L.A. Casting director Anthony Kraus was featured for his ties to Arnold and his part in the movie "Ordinary Angels." **MARCH:** It was reported that February 26 was a long day and night for many area ranchers and farmers, community members, and by the end of it, well over 100 fire departments, as they fought to contain the Betty's Way Blaze. Out of eight teams competing at the community center, "Spice Girls" cooked up the #1 chili of the night at Chamber's Annual Chili Cook-Off. After being discovered at Grazers Bar & Grill, Arnold resident B.J. Jamison was becoming a rising Country singer, working with a producer and performing in Nashville. Red flag fire conditions changed to an 11 inch blanket of snow on March 8.

The Arnold Fire Department presented its annual awards, with Cassy DeLosh named EMT of the Year, Amanda Wehnes, runner-up; Robbi Smith Fireman of the Year, and Dalton Swopes, runner-up. At the AEDC's request, Village Board members approved the purchase of two lots to make way for new housing. Arnold speech team members Rio Remund and Ella Cool were named state champions in duet acting. Rotarians served up pancakes to 320 people at their 50th annual spring fundraiser. **APRIL:** The city park was a frenzy of activity, as kids hunted eggs at the annual Chamber-sponsored Easter Egg Hunt. Dell Cerny was recognized for 50 years of service with the Arnold Volunteer Fire Department at the March banquet. Ethan Furne was selected as Arnold's delegate to Boys State. It was a win-win for the Arnold Alumni Association and the Arnold Community Foundation Fund,

when they combined efforts to mail out a copy of the Alumni News to every alum by the end of April. Progress continued on the Arnold Area Historical Society's Cornerstone Project, with the foundation walls completed. At the request of Arnold Rotary, the Arnold Tree Board was reactivated, with the following appointed to its board: Mary Becker, Kenneth Goodenow, Jr. and Peg Scott. A.H.S. Alumni Board members, Cheryl Mills Uhrmacher, Patty Purcell Goodenow, Kenny Goodenow, Ali Rosentrater Goodenow, Josh Magill, Tammy Milne Weinman, Darlene Hagler Rimpley, April Mills Tickle, and Courtney Beshaler Evans, were keeping the tradition of the annual banquet and program alive. The village of Arnold was hosting a hazardous waste collection through the end of April, using containers provided by an outside company. The town received its annual spring cleaning, as organizations and the school combined forces to

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ARA Tree Project Continues

Using an excavator, Scott McDowell of Loup Valley Construction removes one of 20 dead or dying trees identified for removal at the Arnold Recreation Area. Arnold Tree Board member Mary Becker said money left over from a \$5,000 Village of Arnold grant to plant trees in the fall made the project possible. "We were fortunate that the board approved the extra money for this fall," said Becker. "We didn't wait. Some of the trees were in a marshy area that is dry this time of the year, so equipment can get in. We plan on planting new trees and will be looking at the best locations. It's already changed the look of (the ARA)." Becker also said Village employees helped with the project. - Courtesy photo