

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120 (USPS 032480) SINGLE COPY: 75 CENTS VOLUME 108, NUMBER 39

Contestants Cook Up Some Good Chili at 36th Annual Event

The 36th Annual Chili Cook-off, sponsored by the Arnold Chamber of Commerce, was held on Saturday, March 1st. While it didn't draw the crowd it typically does, fun was still had by the some 150 people who were able to attend. People of all ages sampled contestants' chili, had a bowl of chicken noodle or potato soup, danced to good tunes, played a hand of cards, and socialized.

There were seven teams entered up this year. Five judges rated each chili with a score from 1 - 5 for the following categories: presentation, smell, flavor, texture and overall impression. The judges were Rudy Vickers, Jim Long, Brad Nansel, Ali Goodenow and Buzz Lohmiller. The results were: 1st place with 68 points, "No Ma'am" sponsored by J & V Firearms, team members Jim Daly, Brandon Nansel and Brent Kulp; 2nd place with 61 points, Arnold Fall Festival, Robin Dailey and Della Dailey; 3rd place with 60 points, Austin Snyder; Best Decorated, "Forrest Gump" sponsored by Oakbrook Physical Therapy, Josh and Molly Magill and Tony Hall; People's Choice, "Chili Dog" sponsored by Pinnacle Bank, team members Aaron Coleman, Jessica Fletcher, Trish Vickers, Patty Goodenow and Carma Edwards; Mr. and Ms. Congeniality, Tony Hall and Val Daly. Winners in all categories donated their prize money back to Chamber, which is not expected but appreciated.

Winners are pictured on page 5.



Sara Coleman leans in to chat with Flint Snyder at Pinnacle Bank's booth during Saturday night's Chamber-sponsored Chili Cook-Off. - Debbie Connelly photo



The Arnold Volunteer Fire Department was among fire crews working day and night last week to contain what is now known as the Custer County Complex Fires. - AVFD photo

Volunteers Fight to Contain CC Complex Fires

Arnold Volunteer Fire Department members held their annual banquet and awards night on Friday, February 28, giving them a well-earned break from helping fight what is now called the Custer County Complex Fires.

Custer County Emergency Management announced that day that fire crews were making significant progress in controlling the wildfires in the county. Supporting agencies had been relieved, and the fire was now solely under the administration of Custer County Emergency Management, Broken Bow, and the Merna Fire Department. As of Friday, the fire in neighboring Eureka Valley had burned 4,800 acres and was 75% contained.

Multiple fires that sparked on February 25 required support from the National Guard and from the air. Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen announced a state of emergency on the 27th.

Coverage of the AVFD awards night will be in next week's issue.



Time to Spring Forward

Daylight Savings Time begins on Sunday, March 9. Be sure to set your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed on Saturday night.

Decisions Made on Potential School Facility Improvement Project

At their regular meeting held on February 11, the Arnold School Board approved the Construction Manager at Risk method of construction delivery for a potential school facility improvement project. The method was approved under the Political Subdivisions Construction Alternatives Act. Board members also approved the Construction Manager at Risk selection criteria and evaluation weights for the potential facility improvement project.

Superintendent Joel Morgan said the method creates a scenario where if a project is committed, there would be a guaranteed maximum price from the manager, who would also manage all estimates and subcontractors. This would create more cost control and transparency through the project. Approving the criteria and evaluation weights means that evaluation of proposals would be based on financial resources, personnel, timeline, completion of previous projects, and the overall reputation and experience of the company.

In a third vote, the board approved appointed mem-

bers to the Construction Management at Risk Selection Committee for the potential project. Committee members would be: Derek Aldridge, legal representative, representative from Wilkins Architecture; Justin Strasburg, Bryce Nansel, Joe Cool, Dave Smith, Scott McDowell, and Joel Morgan.

"The process is being conducted and overseen by our school attorney, and they have recommendations of who should sit on this committee," said Mr. Morgan. "Scott (McDowell) and Dave (Smith) were asked to be a part of this because of their background, work experience, and perspectives we felt they could offer the evaluation process."

On February 18, the school hosted a pre-conference for any companies that may be interested in submitting a proposal for evaluation and consideration. All proposals are due on March 18.

"While we wait for proposals and estimates, we are also working on the financial planning aspects so we can clearly present costs and the local property tax impact it would have on all land owners, residential and agricul-

ture. Our goal is to clearly communicate every aspect of a potential project so that the community can form their own assessment based on factual information," said Mr. Morgan.

The current construction manager (CM) process will take about two months. After the CM is chosen, the school will take concepts to the public for input and discussion regarding the scope and cost on any form of project. It will also be scheduling tours for the public to come in and see the facilities to gain a better understanding of current conditions and needs.

In other business at the regular meeting, board members approved a teaching contract for Jessica Vohs, who will be teaching 2nd grade. She will be replacing Mrs. Anderson, who accepted a teaching position of her hometown of Gothenburg. The 2025-2026 principal contract was also approved.

The next regular meeting will be held Tuesday, March 11, at 7:00 p.m.



Arnold Has Top Speller In County

Christensen named champion

The best spellers in Custer County were found on February 25, as Arnold Schools hosted the annual competition for the first time ever. Arnold eighth grader Lindsay Christensen (far left) made her school proud, coming away as the champion. Jenna Bartak (center), from Anselmo-Merna and Robert Bratt from Ansley came in 2nd and 3rd. Arnold senior Dolores Duponcheel gives a report on the Bee inside this issue. - APS photo