

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

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Upon her retirement as Custer County Clerk, Conni Gracey was surprised when Nebraska Secretary of State office representative Andrew Buller showed up at the party to present her a plaque signed by Robert B. Evnen. Gracey, who has been a resident of Arnold for 43 years, officially retired on September 1st.

- Nebraska Secretary of State office photo

Gracey Retires as Long-Time County Clerk

For the past almost four decades, Arnold resident Conni Gracey has been wearing many different hats in the Custer County Clerk's office, from being secretary for the board of supervisors, to keeping and managing budgets and levies, vacating roads, keeping veterans records, managing payroll, and overseeing elections. She describes the office where she worked for 39 years as "the hub of the wheel." Conni has hung up all of those hats, officially retiring from her role as the Custer County Clerk on September 1.

A big part of Gracey's duties was serving as county election commissioner. Changes she saw coming to elections and other programs initial-

ized her decision to retire. "New programs are being implemented for elections, and our MIPS-payroll program and the Custer County website updated to be ADA compliant. I just thought instead of learning all these changes, that it would be an excellent time to get a new person started, especially with the election program," she said.

Her career at the Custer County Courthouse started by chance. After studying accounting at the Lincoln School of Commerce, Conni returned home and went into the courthouse to register to vote. The next day, on January 13, 1975, then-clerk Marian Woodward called her to see if she would be interested in being her deputy and bookkeeper. Gracey took Woodward up on her offer, and after working in those positions for six years, she left, got married, and raised a family. And then, Clerk Marge Mason called her to see if she would be interested in working again. She was, and upon Mason's retirement in 2002, Gracey ran for office and became the official Custer County Clerk.

"When I started in 1975, I used a manual typewriter and all the payroll was done on paper, figuring social security, retirement, and withholdings by hand, and each check

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Annual Trunk Or Treat Is Today In Downtown Arnold

Starting at 6:30 p.m., on Thursday, October 23, downtown Arnold will be filled with activity as Chamber sponsors its annual Trunk or Treat. There will be plenty of spooky, safe fun on Walnut Street, as decorated trunks will be lining the streets offering treats. While they are there, they'll be judged, and the best trunk will win \$25.00 in Chamber Bucks.

A Glow Stick Hunt is planned, and those finding a glow stick with a pumpkin will win Rialto Theatre Bucks. Other games include eyeball putt putt, apple bobbing, monster freeze dance, pumpkin tic-tac-toe, and more.

Chairman Taylour Snyder is switching things up a bit this year, and the games will replace the traditional costume contest. For additional information, contact Taylour at 308-660-1074.



Buddies Identified

Drivers traveling along South Carroll Street have been doing a double-take as they spot two creepy skeleton pals hanging out on a bench. Arnold couple Jason and Amanda Wehnes set up the display, then posted a picture on social media asking individuals to identify the two, saying, "The first person to identify these two gets a prize!" Amanda said there was actually a tie. Joel Morgan and Brandon and Amy Nansel were the winners.

On the social media post, Joel said, "Looks like Brad Atkins and his copilot (Cal Joy)." Later joking that he would take Brad's booster seat when he's done with it. Brandon and Amy messaged Amanda directly, saying that it had to be Brad and Cal.

The idea came about when Jason was in the school bus behind Brad and Cal, and thought to himself, those two have been friends for a long time and that they had quite the height difference - just like his skeletons. From there, he and Amanda went to Good Will to dress the two skeletons. They were even in contact with Jenny, Brad's daughter, to make sure they got the outfit right.

Rumor has it that Brad and Cal are out to seek revenge. Time will tell...

Village Board Hears Project Updates, Considers Rate Increases

Arnold Tree Board member Mary Becker updated Village Board members on the Tree Project Grant at their regular meeting held on October 13. Village employees had a zoom meeting with the Nebraska Forest Service, learning that the earliest the Village can start working on the grant is December 1 due to waiting until the NFS sends a contract. Viter Tree Solutions will start removing the trees in December, and Kennedy Landscape Services will plant the trees in late spring or early summer, 2026. There will be some trees planted into the ARA entryway and a couple of trees will be planted on the horseshoe campsite on the south side. The tree board will also focus

on removing trees and planting trees by the playground equipment.

Village Clerk Patricia Lamberty gave an update on the Old Mill Park bathroom project for Justin Strasburg, who was unable to attend the meeting. The concrete and plumbing should be completed in the next two weeks, and masonry work will be done before the end of the year. Framing will be completed after that. The restrooms will be open by soccer season. Strasburg said the goal is to get the lights in before summer. The poles are set for the batting cage, which will be strung in the spring.

Board chairman Zach Hagler reported that the Custer County Recycling Center is going to close.

The clerk said that Lexington Area Solid Waste Agency (LASWA) will accept the recyclables. Board members requested that Lamberty contact the North Platte Recycling Center to see if they accept recyclables from Custer County; otherwise, the recyclables will be taken to LASWA.

Board members voted to increase the construction & demolition rates from \$50.00 to \$60.00 per ton, and \$20.00 to \$50.00 per ton for complete removal of a building or buildings. Members also voted to increase solid waste rates. Residential will increase from \$15.00 to \$17.50, which includes use of the roll-off container. Commercial will be determined by a multiplier.



Young Business Owner Finds Space to Grow

After being in business for close to 10 years and needing to expand, Drew Bowers of Bowers Small Engine Repair found just the right property, purchasing Randy Connell's shop and property just east of Mills Hardware in December of 2024. His move into the new space began this past May. He's all settled in and now has plenty of room to repair a variety of small engines. Bowers started out in the smaller building attached to the car wash, and says his business just continues to grow.

- Debbie Connelly photo

AEDC Director Reports on Sidewalk Project

Arnold Economic Development Director Cheryl Carson gave Village Board members an update on the planned downtown sidewalk project at their regular meeting held in October.

Carson said that TC Engineering visited Arnold twice in September to initiate engineering plan work for Phase 1 locations. All site work, from the storefront to the street level curb, will comply with ADA guidelines.

On Day 1, the morning was spent discussing different location challenges, business owner and public wants, a desire to disperse with step-up where possible, infrastructure updates, additional lighting in the future if desired, and better marking of mid-block ADAs with signage and paint lines. The latter part of the day

was used to shoot street level elevations for proper drainage needs and general elevation gathering.

On the second day, the engineers recorded precise storefront elevations and documented the location of underground infrastructure.

TC Engineering will notify the AEDC once they have completed elevation, layout and potential cost estimates for this phase. Once returned, business owners and the Village will be contacted one-on-one for further discussion of their location in order to move onto the next steps. At a future date, there will be a full presentation given to the Village Board for consideration, as each step comes together for the full project proposal.