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Forty-five students from Arnold, Ansley and Sandhills schools listen to Beto Rincon, Ogallala Commons Apprentice/Intern, speak last Wednesday at "Youth Engagement Day" at the Arnold Community Center. Seven business entrepreneurs from Arnold were involved in engaging the youth and opening their minds to the possibility of coming back to work or start their own business in their hometowns. (Kendra Veirs photo)

Youth Get Engaged

"I learned that my career should be something I love to do."

"It makes me want to come back."

"I didn't know my community wanted me to come back."

These were some of the comments made by students after participating in the first-ever "Youth Engagement Day" held last Wednesday at the Arnold Community Center. Forty-five high school students from Arnold, Ansley and Sandhills schools participated in the half day-long event, hearing special speakers and engaging with Arnold business owners and entrepreneurs.

Sponsored by the Arnold Economic Development Corporation and Ogallala Commons, the event introduced students to leaders in the field of rural economic development, including CAPABLE Executive Director Jenny Fox, Central Economic Development Corporation President Melissa Garcia, Ogallala Commons Director Darryl Birkenfeld from Nazareth, Texas, and AEDC Director Sandy Hicks. Also traveling from Texas was Beto Rincon, an Ogallala Commons Apprentice/Intern. Representatives from Arnold school were also there, including Principal Dawn Lewis, Guidance Counselor Ashley Meyer and school board member Eric Nelson.

Birkenfeld talked to students

about community internships through the Ogallala Commons, a unique work experience and hometown career exploration program that takes place in local community or a regional institution or business. To date, Arnold has had three interns working in the community over a span of four years, and his talk sparked interest in at least one student who was interviewed after the event.

Local entrepreneurs leading small groups on the topic of "Getting Engaged in My Community" and giving short presentations were the following: Dena Mills, Mills Hardware; Holly Hornung-Remund and Jessica Phillips, Winsome Inn and Suites; Kristi Dvorak and Melody Hansen, Sublime Artistry; Heather Hagler, Homegrown Kids Childcare; Kim Beshaler, Nebraska Farmhouse Antiques; Clay and Julie Mohr, School House Graphics; and Shannon Olson, The Body Shop. The presenters shared their professional background history, described their profession and how they got started, and described what they are looking for in future employees. Some also spoke about how they will transition their business to the next generation and gave words of advice.

After the presentations, small groups visited one business site and explored the town. After



Clay Mohr of School House Graphic Products gives an Ansley student a friendly handshake at "Youth Engagement Day." (Courtesy photo)

lunch, students heard a presentation titled "Arnold's Economic Development Journey" by Sandy Hicks. To close out the day, each group of students told about what they learned.

"I enjoyed all of the business owners' stories and how their business now is not where they started out," said one student. Another said they would have liked to have seen all of the businesses, something Hicks

said will be changed next year.

"More schools wanted to be involved, but because of scheduling conflicts, couldn't," said Hicks. "This event had the kids asking a lot of questions. We felt it was a great first-time event that will kick off a series of Youth Engagement/Entrepreneur events. Our youth matters and they are our rural communities' futures."

ARA/Police Protection Discussed at Village Board Meeting

Plans are underway for more improvements at the Arnold Recreation Area. Kelli Blevins, representing Arnold Rotary, spoke with members of the Village Board last Monday at their regular meeting about a project that Rotary would like to take on. Blevins said all of the picnic tables need repainted. Their goal is to have the project finished by next Memorial Day.

Discussion was held on making the project part of the annual spring clean-up day, and involving Arnold School students if available. Clerk Patty Lamberty said it could be one of the bigger projects.

The project will begin with the Village lining up the 23 tables and evaluating them on whether they need repaired before sanding and painting. Rotary will work with Roy Bierman and the clerk on this project.

Discussion was also held on the need to fix up the play area at the ARA, which the Village plans to do in the future.

ARA Rates

Discussion was held on increasing rates for camping at the Arnold Recreation Area. Currently, the rates are \$10.00 per camper and \$6.00 for a tent. Through a resolution, rates will be increased to \$15.00 for a camper and a tent. A tent only will be \$6.00. It was mentioned that the village has also been looking into rules posted at area campgrounds before deciding on its own.

Police Protection

Chairman Glen Bowers gave members an update on a meeting held September 24 with County Sheriff Dan Osmond on the possibility of sharing police protection. The towns of Arnold, Ansley, Oconto, Callaway and Mason City were represented, although Mason City is not interested. County board reps were also there, and want to be involved.

Bowers said the cost would be \$35,000.00 a year for an added eight hours a week of police protection for towns sharing the cost. Board members said they understand the cost in-

Continued on page 2.

Vocal Clinic at Arnold

The Conference Vocal Clinic will be held Monday, October 27, at the Arnold Community Center. The 6:30 p.m. concert, directed by Leah Purdy from North Platte High School, is open to the public. Residents are encouraged to come and enjoy a good performance.

TeamMates Mentoring Program Expanding

The Arnold chapter of TeamMates kicked off their third year in August and are adding to their team. The program is pleased to announce the addition of Jessica Phillips as the new mentor manager. Phillips will be taking over the recruiting, training and matching of mentors and students. Leron Bierman will continue to be the team's program and event coordinator. Dawn Lewis continues as the program's student coordinator.

Recently, the program recruited in the fifth grade class and has 11 students ready to be matched. In addition to the new fifth graders, there are a handful of students in other grades to be matched as well.

If you are interested in becoming a part of the team, please contact Jessica Phillips at 308-520-9971. Mentor training will take place Tuesday, October 28, at 7:00 p.m., at the high school.

School's Buildings & Grounds Committee will Consider Energy Saving Updates

At last Tuesday's Arnold School Board meeting, an October 21 date was scheduled for Superintendent Pat Osmond to meet with the Buildings & Grounds committee to have discussion on a project that would increase energy efficiency in the elementary portion of the school.

Mr. Osmond said Callaway school recently completed a project of installing individual Mitsubishi heating and cooling units in each elementary classroom. The ductless system allows teachers to control the temperature in their own room. He said it's a project that he would like to see Arnold complete this summer before he retires.

"They are modern, quiet and efficient, and (the system) works well. The Callaway teachers are very happy," he said.

The existing elementary air conditioning units would be replaced with the new units.

"(In the elementary) we would see immediate energy savings. It will be much cheaper than starting up the boilers on cooler days when teachers just need to take the chill off," he

said.

At the same time, he would like to see the old single pane windows in the elementary replaced with double pane, crank-outs. Eventually, he would like to see Arnold school replace all of it's single pane windows, but it would need to be done in stages over a span of time.

"I'd like to see the elementary comfortable first. (The new windows) would be more energy efficient and would provide a second escape route if needed," he said.

Superintendent's Contract

Discussion was held on whether or not the Arnold and Callaway boards need to have another combined meeting to discuss the new superintendent's contract. It was decided that the two board presidents will have a phone conversation with the schools' attorney to hammer out the contract details and report back. The goal is to have the new contract ready for the two boards to approve by November.

Principal's Report

Principal Dawn Lewis said that Arnold will be hosting the Conference vocal clinic at the

community center on October 27.

She reported that Homecoming Week went well. The pep rally at the park was very well attended, and the school thanks Great Plains Communications and the Arnold Booster Club for providing the food and serving everyone.

Arnold students in Grades 9-12 will be involved in the AEDC Career Fair on October 15. Students from other schools will also be attending.

Mrs. Lewis had the opportunity to tour the Career Pathways Institute in Grand Island with other members of the CAPABLE board. The facility is impressive, and it sparked what will become an interesting conversation in future meetings about how a program such as this might benefit the students and businesses in Custer County and draw on the strengths of each individual school and community.

Parent-Teacher conferences were once again well attended in Grades K-6. She said the school still struggles with the Grades 7-12 attendance, even after having placed a reminder call the day before the confer-

ences this year. She said they will continue to explore ways to get secondary parents more involved in conferences. Many are very good about checking on students' grades on a regular basis, so the ease of technology may be contributing to the low attendance.

Upon examining data, the school's full staff identified the next school improvement goal should be related to math. The school improvement team will attend a workday/workshop at ESU10 in early November to get started on the process of establishing goals and activities to help meet those goals. The school is in year two of the five year cycle. Both areas identified as required actions from the visit 18 months ago have been addressed.

One of the school's paras, Staci, will be relocating with her family. The school advertised the position for two weeks in *The Sentinel* and received two very strong applications. After visiting with both applicants, the position has been offered to Melissa Bierman. She will begin on Monday, October 20.