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The Arnold Sentinel

Early Voting to Begin in Nebraska

September 27 - The first general election ballots are out the door and headed to Nebraska voters overseas. Early voting will begin in the state in less than a week, reminds Secretary of State John Gale.

Ballots were mailed out to military members and overseas voters 45 days prior to the election. Ballots will be mailed to in-state voters who previously requested an early voting ballot starting on October 3. On October 10, in person early voting will also be available at all county election offices. Some county offices may be closed that day in observance of Columbus Day, so voters may want to check in advance.

"In the last presidential election, 26 percent of people voted early, by mail and in person," observed Gale. "Since then, many more counties have conducted special elections by mail, so it will be interesting to see if that translates to more voters casting a ballot by mail for the general election." Gale said it is typical to see a large surge in early voting as soon as it is available and then again right before Election Day. "In 2012, county election officials were very busy with early voters. Some counties utilize drop boxes, which also get a lot of heavy use. People receive their ballot, but rather than mail it back, they simply slip it into the drop box."

Gale said drop boxes are checked regularly to ensure that ballots are not left sitting too long. Nebraska law allows for county election officials to begin counting early ballots the day prior to Election Day.

"Whether returned in a drop box or by mail, voters need to check those early ballots to ensure they are placed in the correct envelope, properly signed and if they are mailed, have enough postage for delivery," Gale said.

He went on to say that anyone wishing to vote early needs to keep in mind the following deadlines:

- If you are registered, you have until October 28 to ask that an early voting ballot be mailed to you.

- Mailed ballots must be returned to the county election office by the close of polls on Election Day, November 8.

- November 7 is the last day for in-person, early voting at county election offices.

Applications to receive an early ballot by mail are available through the Secretary of State's website: www.sos.ne.gov. Look under "Elections" for the section labeled "Voter Forms." Applications are available in English and Spanish. They should be mailed to the proper county election office for processing. Also on the front page of the Secretary of State's website, voters can see sample ballots in both English and Spanish.

"Whether early or at the polls, by mail or in person, the most important thing is that eligible Nebraskans go vote," said Gale. "State and local candidates need our support and there are important issues that need to be decided. This is an opportunity to let our voices be heard."

Crop Progress Report

As of September 25, the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service for Nebraska Crop Progress report said corn mature was 69 percent, ahead of 60 last year and the five-year average of 61. Harvested was 7 percent, near 9 last year and behind 13 average.

Soybeans dropping leaves was 75 percent, ahead of 63 last year and 61 average. Harvest was 9 percent, near 10 both last year and average.

Halsteads Get On Board "AirB&B"



Gary and Merri Jo Halstead are welcoming guests to their new bed and breakfast at 707 North Carroll Street. The couple had their first booking in September. (Kendra Veirs photo)

New Bed & Breakfast Opens in Town

If you've never heard of AirB&B, Arnold residents Gary and Merri Jo Halstead can fill you in. The couple has signed up with the fairly new, trusted community marketplace to open their own bed and breakfast, and they've already hosted their first guests in the house they now call home.

Gary taught at Arnold Public Schools from 1994 to 2010, and the couple then relocated to McCook, where he signed up to teach in the prison. When he retired, they started their search for a home in Arnold.

"We have always considered Arnold to be our home. We wanted to be closer to family - especially those grandchildren. We wanted a big enough house

for us to host family and friends," said Merri Jo.

When the home of Betty and the late Doug Cole came up for sale on North Carroll Street, the Halsteads knew it was the one. They purchased the house in December of 2013, and began updating every room in the house.

"We feel that we found the perfect house from the perfect family," said Merri Jo. "It was hard at first to do anything. As Gary said, 'We didn't buy just a house, we bought a 50-year legacy.'"

Merri Jo said she has had a dream to run a bed and breakfast for years, and once the house was remodeled, Gary finally got on board. They found

the international hosting service - AirB&B on-line, and stayed in one in Omaha when their granddaughter was hospitalized. They had a great experience, and after a conversation with their hosts, they decided to give it a try. After only four days, they had their first booking and welcomed a Lincoln couple into their home who were in the area with the LEAD program.

The Halsteads have plenty of room to host guests. The house has a large finished basement with an attached bathroom, and three additional bedrooms upstairs if needed. For breakfast, the couple was served French toast, bacon, juice and coffee. Merri Jo said guests are

also welcome to enjoy the fire pit area in the back yard, laundry facilities, television and the big front porch with a swing.

In jest, Merri Jo said they also offer "sparkling conversation."

"We enjoyed having them in our home, and they seemed to enjoy themselves," she said. "They left a complimentary note and a great review on the AirB&B website."

The Halsteads have found a great way to advertise their new venture through AirB&B. It connects people to unique travel experiences, at any price point, in more than 34,000 cities and 191 countries. The website states it is the easiest way for people to monetize their extra space and showcase it to an audience of millions.

Importance of Newspapers Highlighted This Week

Saying "I don't need newspapers, I get my news from the internet" is the same as saying "I don't need farmers, cause I get my food at the supermarket."

How important are newspapers to our small towns and larger cities? It would be hard to imagine a world without them.

This week, October 2-8, is National Newspaper Week, giving *The Sentinel* and newspapers all across the nation the chance to remind citizens of their importance in society.

Newspapers keep an eye on local government, publish public notices, report on current events in the business community, keep up with what's happening in our schools, and report on births, deaths and news about people you know. They are the champion for their towns in reporting news that will uplift and keep their communities progressing. Newspapers are simply, "the glue" that holds a community together.

This week *The Sentinel* is publishing a two-page spread of materials that celebrate and underscore the role newspapers play, including cartoons, editorials, media ads, and for fun, a puzzle.

Organizers Gearing Up for Operation Christmas Child

The Community Packing Party for Operation Christmas Child has been set for Monday, November 14, beginning at 8:00 a.m.

"Many hands make light work" is certainly true when it comes to getting this work done," said Melody Jennings. "The goal for this year is 500 boxes, and believe me, it is a lot of work to fill that many boxes."

The committee, made up of representatives from each Arnold church, plans for and tries to collect all the supplies needed before the packing date so they know when they walk into the school gym, everything will be there to fill the boxes.

"This takes a lot of time and a lot of work before-hand," said Jennings. "We shop the clearance sales to find items at discount prices. We order some basic supplies. We encourage people to contribute and drop off supplies at the churches and the school. We have also asked each church to provide 75 or 100 bags of candy so we have one bag for each box."

Jennings added that a former Arnold Baptist Church member has provided 500 toothbrushes again this year, as well as 500 small tubes of toothpaste.

Watch upcoming issues of *The Sentinel* for details on what is needed for the shoeboxes, or contact Melody Jennings. Money may also be donated for shipping costs.



Girl Scouts (from left) Tahnna Nokes, Reagan Cool and Jennifer Barraza make some cupcakes in the Baptist Church kitchen. (Courtesy photo)

Sixteen Girls Sign Up for Arnold's New Girl Scout Program

It has been several years since a Girl Scout program has been offered in Arnold, after the previous Girl Scout leader Cheryl Carson retired in 2007. In April of 2016, new leaders Alicia Tucker, Denisse Zuniga and Jen Meyer started troop number 892, with 16 girls enrolling.

"We hope that the girls learn a lot and have fun at the same time," said leader Tucker, who also mentioned that the group is still new and in the planning stages for this year.

Possibly the most familiar icon for Girl Scouts is their fami-

mous fundraising cookies and don't worry, Troop leaders 892 said that cookie sales will begin on February 3, and there are planned booths around Arnold. The proceeds will be used for camps and outings for the girls. A new cookie this year is S'mores.

Currently, the girls are in their last week of candy/nut sales, with proceeds helping the girls with various projects.

One of the first badges the girls are working on is a cooking badge. They are planning a spaghetti dinner for their fami-

lies, although a date is not set yet for the actual meal. When the girls get close to the end of that badge, another one will be picked to work on. The troop is also planning on going to a UNK volleyball game in October.

Any girl, from ages Kindergarten through Seniors can still join, including those who are homeschooled. Interested persons can either go to www.girlscoutdnebraska.org or come to a meeting. Meetings are held every Monday, at 6:00 p.m. at the Baptist Church.