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CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

(USPS 032480)

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# The Arnold Sentinel



Masons block up existing windows in the former Cardinal Inn, as part of a major remodeling project that started a few weeks ago. The building will be the new home of Arnold Insurance Agency, with completion scheduled in the spring. (Janet Larreau photo)

## Remodeling Underway for New Arnold Insurance Agency Office

When Joe Bob Atkins purchased Arnold Insurance Agency back in 2001, the building located along Highway 92 served its purpose. With only one employee, wife Randi and himself, there was plenty of space. Since that time, the business has grown substantially. It's an understatement to say

that Atkins and his now staff of six have ran out of room. But that's all about to change.

"Rudy's (Vickers) office is in the storage room, Shelley (Smith) is in the furnace room, and everyone has to walk through Heather's office and Shelley's furnace room to get to the bathroom. There's no break

area, no conference room, no copier room and no server storage. It's cluttered," said Atkins.

And with the current lay-out, there's no privacy.

"Insurance is a private business, and it's a challenge to obtain that privacy for insureds to communicate freely with us. Everyone needs their own of-



An old house located west of the former Cardinal Inn was moved a couple of weeks ago by Neil Coleman to make way for parking at the new Arnold Insurance Agency office. Coleman said he moved both the house and its small addition to his rural property northwest of town. He and wife Diana have plans to re-connect the addition and transform the house into a guest cottage for the overflow of kids and grandkids during the holidays. "(The house) will overlook the springs - it will be a scenic location," said Coleman. (Janet Larreau photo)

fice," said Atkins.

Atkins purchased the Cardinal Inn building on the west edge of town in September, and with demo out of the way, construction is underway. Completion is set for April.

"For years we've been contemplating building or something else," said Atkins. "The Cardinal Inn is perfect. It's all trusses and exterior block and the middle is wide open. We're going from 784 square feet to 3,200. It's a big difference."

Atkins had blueprints drawn up and is using a general and subs he insures from the area

to complete the work. The new building will have separate offices, with each having its own window, a conference room, and an area for postage, binders and copiers. The outside will see big changes, with plans for EIFS, stone and signage. Employee parking will be on one side, and public on the other. Atkins said it will be fun, with everything clean and organized.

Arnold Insurance Agency has grown to include two additional locations in Ogallala and Grant, with a total of 13 employees in all three locations.

## School Board Votes on Option-In Transportation/Hears Report on Student Survey Regarding FFA

With the public inspection time well over the three days required, the Arnold School Board approved the Superintendent Contract for Dawn Lewis for the 2016-17 year at their regular meeting held on December 8. The board also approved the Inter-local Agreement for sharing the superintendent with Callaway.

### Transportation for Option Students

The board also approved a petition for transportation for option students in the event that the T.K. Rogers family, who live north of Arnold in an adjoining district, makes the decision to option in. T.K. Rogers, who attended the meeting, said he and his wife have four children, who are in eighth, seventh, fourth and second grades, and the family toured the school the previous day. If they option in, the decision will be made soon so the kids can start at Arnold at the start of the second semes-

ter.

"Your administration represents your school really well," said Rogers. "We are still indecisive at this time, but would like to ride the bus if we option in. We want to know your thoughts on what you are willing to do."

The family lives eight miles out of the Arnold district. It was mentioned that transportation for families optioning in out of the district has been discussed briefly by the transportation committee, but not as a full board. The school has added another van, and the general consensus was that if families are willing to option in, the school would go farther. Principal Lewis said decisions could be made on a case-by-case basis.

In the end, the board voted to pick up the Rogers kids at the end of the oil (north of Arnold, on the Arnold-Dunning road), and deliver them home at the end of the day if they option to

transfer in.

At the January meeting, the board will consider giving the superintendent the power to make transportation decisions for option-in students on a case-by-case basis.

### School Scoring

Principal Joel Morgan gave a report on Nebraska's new accountability system - AQuESTT. The system is broader than past state and federal systems in that it goes beyond test scores to classify schools on, among other factors, growth, improvement and graduate rates, as well as a detailed analysis of individual schools.

Mr. Morgan said the Nebraska Department of Education recently released their AQuESTT final classification report for the 2014-2015 school year. District #89 had an overall rating of 3 (Great). The high school had an overall rating of 2 (Good), the middle school's rating was 4 (Excellent), and the el-

ementary had an overall rating of 3 (Great). School administrators fill out the forms and rank themselves. It was mentioned that the middle school saw improvement, with others seeing no change.

Mr. Morgan said Nebraska is one of the last two states in the nation to have its own accountability system - part of the waiver to exempt the state from the federal mandated "No Child Left Behind" act.

### Ag/FFA Student Survey

A survey was recently conducted with Arnold students in Grades 6-11 to gauge the interest of an Ag/FFA program. Mr. Morgan reported that 84 percent of students stated they would likely enroll in at least one Ag course in high school if it were offered. Fifty-nine percent of students stated they would be interested in participating in FFA. Fifty-five percent of students also stated they would like to be able to participate in School House Graphics and FFA if possible.

He also said that Callaway did a similar survey, and over 60 percent said they would participate in an ag class - well over the amount they need to start a program. The two schools are looking at the possibility of sharing a program based on the survey.

In Arnold's survey, students were also asked if they feel there are opportunities that students in other schools have that Arnold does not offer that would make a difference in their high school experience and later in life. Some students expressed interest in Family Consumer Sciences, FBLA, FCCLA and debate.

In Grades 6-11, 75 percent of students said they participate in athletics, 45 percent in music, nine percent in speech, 21 percent in One-Act, and 57 percent stated they were involved in other activities outside of school.

In response to the survey, Mrs. Lewis said, "Our students are very involved."

### Other Reports

Mr. Morgan reported that on Friday, Suicide Prevention Education Coalition (SPEC) will be

hosting a 5th quarter party after the game (December 11) at the community center for high school students. The event is not school sponsored, but is a safe, sponsored event for after basketball games.

An early dismissal is scheduled for December 14 to allow the staff to travel to Callaway for a presentation from the EHA rep regarding health insurance options. The options include a PPO plan or a high deductible plan where the difference goes into an HSA to be spent on any medical need.

### Superintendent's Report

Mrs. Lewis reported on her attendance at a CAPABLE (Custer Alliance for Preparing and Advocating Business, Labor and Education) board meeting. She said the career academy ideas that were brought up, including a construction-oriented academy where students from the county build a house, are already taught at Arnold school.

"Jenny (Fox) is doing a great job, but I'm not sure if this is the direction we want to go," she said. "We are already doing 'soft skills' in Arnold with School House Graphic Products."

### School Board Elections

Mrs. Lewis reminded board members whose terms are up that they need to file before February 16. The terms of Duane Bowers, Diana Coleman and Eric Nelson are up. All non-incumbents have until March 1 to file.

The next school board meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, January 12, at 7:00 p.m.

## Weather Summary

Kendra Veirs  
Cooperative Weather Observer  
WEATHER STATION  
LOCATED AT MILLS' SHOP,  
ACROSS FROM  
ALL POINTS CO-OP

DATE	H	L	M
8	59	28	0
9	63	28	0
10	66	26	0
11	67	26	0
12	57	25	0
13	35	30	0
14	36	30	0



## Waiting Their Turn

(From left) kindergartners Duane Barraza, Tyson Schacher and Shane Gibson wait their turn to perform on stage at the Grades K-12 Christmas program held last Thursday evening. The program, directed by Ms. Chrysanne Bailey, drew a large audience of family and friends. Watch net week's Holiday issue for more scenes from the program. (Jessica Tickle photo)