



Merry Christmas

one and all



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South Loup River Valley

CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

(USPS 032480)

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Arnold's Cemetery Cherubs Decorate for the Holidays



Rich Dvorak helps wife Kristi place a wreath at the gravesites of Sylvan and Opal Mills before the Christmas holiday. (Janet Larreau photos)

When out-of-state resident Colleen Cearley wants to remember her brother, the late Dan Pickett, she calls on a group that is known locally as the "Cemetery Cherubs." The volunteers go to work, creating a custom wreath for the holiday

or special occasion, and when the time is right, place it securely at Dan's gravesite. When the holiday or occasion is over, the cherubs remove the wreath and store it.

"Colleen sends money for Dan for several holidays, and always

sends extra money to decorate someone else's grave, and she leaves that up to us," said Diane Sanford, one of the cherubs who help raise money for the Arnold Cemetery website.

In 2013 and 2014, the cherubs chose to use the money to decorate Inky Ingalls' grave with a wreath, and this year they chose R.E. Allen's grave.

"Inky did the same kind of construction work as Dan, and this year we chose R.E. Allen, who was Arnold's founder, because Dan, who wasn't originally from here, loved Arnold so much," said Diane.

Colleen, who lives in Kansas, is supporting the Arnold Cemetery Wreath project and Arnold because of her brother. She's not the only one who takes advantage of the cherub service. This Christmas season, the cherubs decorated 15 graves at the cemetery for locals and people who live out-of-town.

"A lot of people still don't realize the service is available," said Kristi Dvorak, who came up with the idea of creating a website for the cemetery.

"Carol Crosland of Omaha sends money for us to decorate her parents' graves. She's been so good to us. She always pays us extra," said Kristi.

The cherubs take great care to make sure the wreaths are in good shape before they are displayed. After one season, some wreaths are total re-dos, and some hold up just fine. After the original fee is charged to create a wreath, a small fee is



Cemetery cherubs Diane Sanford (left) and Kristi Dvorak used extra money sent by out of state resident Colleen Cearley to create a wreath and decorate the grave of Arnold's founder, R.E. Allen, for the Christmas holiday. Colleen is the sister of the late Dan Pickett, who she remembers several times each year using the Cemetery Cherub service.

charged to update or repair the wreath.

The cherubs also create cash and carry wreaths to decorate homes.

"We're starting to branch out," said Kristi. "We started with greenery, and now we are creating grapevine, tulle, swags, pine cone and window wreaths."

All proceeds are put in a fund

to maintain the cemetery website, which is set to go live very soon.

"(The cherubs) are a little short handed since we lost Sandy (Hicks), and we could use a couple more people," said Kristi.

For more information about the wreath project, or to place an order, contact Kristi at 308-870-4480.

LB840 Funds Help Hardware Store Purchase Electric Sign



Mills Hardware's new electronic sign - installed in front of the business on the east edge of town - is visible from Highway 92. The sign can be programmed to advertise what the store carries for cold (as in now) and hot weather.

An electronic sign installed at Mills Hardware is catching the attention of not only Arnold residents, but people traveling through on Highway 92. The large, 8 ft. wide x 7 ft. tall, sign has the newest capabilities in technology, said Andrew Tickle, who helps manage the business, and worked out the details of ordering and installing the sign for owners Terry and Dena Mills.

"We decided to update our

logo and start a new branding for ourselves," said Tickle. "When that decision was made, we decided an electronic sign would be the way to reach out to our customers and not expect them to come to us."

Tickle helped the Baptist church in the process of getting their sign and knew all that was involved, although the technology has changed over time.

"It took us about a year to pull the trigger on it. It's a good way

to put things out there that people can see. It was a very big investment," he said.

The Mills utilized LB840 funds through the AEDC for their investment. A \$15,000.00 loan and \$2,000.00 grant was approved by the village board for the projects of purchasing the sign and updating the store's HVAC system.

The sign, which has a 16 pixel rating, translating to 40 high x 160 pixels, can run all spectrums of color. The LED takes up about three quarters of the height, with the logo above, and is 8 ft. wide. Information is transmitted wirelessly from the store. The sign can be pre-programmed by temperature. Tickle said information can pop up when it is cold or hot to sell certain items in the store. It also has still image capabilities.

"An event or promotion can be scheduled six months from now," said Tickle. "We will get to the point where we will change things every week or couple of days so that people have a chance to read it. We haven't played with images yet, but we will be able to put some of the brand logos out there, like Milwaukee or Woods Industry, that we carry. We just need to get a catalog logo built of what the sign handles."

Tickle said the sign has received good reaction from customers.

"It has been our experience that other hardware friends have had good results with electronic signs. They have a proven track record, and that's another reason we went for it," said Tickle. "One of the goals in the long run is to help sales and promote the community at the same time."



'Tis The Season

Kacey Dvorak (left) and Jadeyn Bubak present a Callaway Good Life Center resident a handmade tie blanket for Christmas. Residents of both the Good Life Center and Riverview Apartments in Arnold will stay warmer this cold winter thanks to the efforts of Grades 6-12 at Arnold, who loaded up in a bus and delivered the blankets last Friday before Christmas break. The students sang carols, and Principal Joel Morgan played Santa. The service project was organized by Nicole Badgley, and material for the blankets was donated by Arnold Insurance Agency and the Joe Bob and Randi Atkins family. (Courtesy photo)