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(USPS 032480)

THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2015

VOLUME 99, NUMBER 1

The Arnold Sentinel

CCF Awards Grant to AEDC for Cemetery Website Project

On May 19, 2015, the Scholarship and Grants Committee recommended, and the full Board of Directors of the Custer County Foundation approved a \$2,500.00 grant to the Arnold Economic Development Corporation for the Arnold Cemetery Website Project.

Kristi Dvorak, who initiated the project and who is in charge of the website for the AEDC, filled out the grant application in April, and said the full amount requested from the CCF was granted.

In the application, Kristi wrote that she first heard of digitizing a cemetery in 2012 and was mesmerized with the idea. The cemeteries that were digitizing at the time were only providing a digital list of names and dates of the deceased in their cemetery. She said the part of her that loves genealogy thought it should include more personal information than just a name and date.

"After all, when I walk

through a cemetery or am researching family history, I want to know the story of the person - to get a sense of who they were and their accomplishments in life," said Kristi.

As the idea began to take shape, she realized this website would be like no other.

"This website gives us a place to memorialize our loved ones, share information with those across the world, encourage community togetherness, and promote Arnold as a great place to live and visit," said Kristi.

Data is currently being entered on over 2,500 personal pages of those buried in the Arnold Cemetery. The website is in Phase 6 and near completion, with an estimated date of going live in December 2015.

With the CCF grant money, the AEDC is now hiring one to two local residents that have good attention to detail to enter the remaining data and headstone photos. Kristi said it is necessary to pay for this serv-



Lindsay Divan (far right), Executive Director of the Custer County Foundation, presented a \$2,500.00 grant to Kristi Dvorak and AEDC Director Cheryl Carson last week for the Arnold Cemetery Website Project. (Kendra Veirs photo)

ice, as the amount of time that it takes to enter the data is huge, and it is unreasonable to ask anyone to volunteer the amount of hours necessary to complete the project.

The Custer County Foundation is a non-profit community trust,

which is structured to seek out, receive and administer funds to meet the present and future needs of the residents of Custer County. Please turn to page 4 for a full news release on additional grants awarded this spring.

Town Hall Meeting Answers Farmers' Questions on Multi-State Syngenta Lawsuits

By Kendra Veirs

Over the past few months, many area farmers have received numerous letters from lawyers across the country, soliciting them to join in their class-action lawsuits against Swiss-owned Syngenta for the corn market drop in later 2012 through today. Some letters promise as much as a \$1.00 per bushel recovery, while others ask immediately for a check "to get your claim started today."

On June 19, several farmers met at the Arnold Community Center meeting room, where Nathaniel DeWald, attorney at law, with Person, DeWald, Deaver Law Firm P.C. L.L.O. of Holdrege, was on hand to answer many questions and explain the in and outs of the legal action against Syngenta - an agribusiness company that produces agrochemicals and seeds.

"I have people coming to me all the time and say, 'I should be doing something, but what with all the mail coming from other states,'" he said. "Not only are you getting solicited, but

our law firm is getting solicited by larger law firms to solicit you. We had no interest in any of the law firms until eight weeks ago when I met with a rep from Watts Guerra L.L.P. out of Texas and knew that I could help farmers get something."

No one was having Town Hall meetings, so for the past eight weeks, and continuing into the next few weeks, DeWald has traveled across the state to explain and answer questions at Town Hall meetings. DeWald's law firm has partnered with Watts Guerra for the mass action suit against Syngenta, for knowingly destabilizing the US corn export market and costing farmers upwards of \$5 billion.

DeWald started off by explaining the significant "Rice" case in 2011, represented by Watts Guerra in the mass action case, that ultimately paid 11,000 some rice farmers 750 million dollars due to a decrease in rice price as a result of GMO (genetically modified organism) traits that were not approved for the export market.

DeWald also explained the difference between a mass action suit - individual lawsuits filed for individual farmers, compared to class act, where a law firm and one farmer represent the rest of the farmers as a group.

DeWald said he is not interested in class action because law firms take a big percentage of the money and the one representative gets a large chunk and all the represented farmers get a "gift card" for a small amount.

So why is Syngenta being sued? A lengthy portion of the presentation answered that question.

It all started in 2011, when Syngenta received a conditional permit on a new trait - Viptera, with the stipulation that they had to keep that trait out of the export market, which they agreed to. Syngenta had contracts with China and South Korea for exported corn and it was stated that if Viptera was found, the contracts would be breached. By the end of 2012, Viptera was showing up on the

shores of China in corn that was mixed at US elevators, on US trains and on boats, since in reality, only one to two percent of the US corn crop had the Viptera trait in it at that time.

In 2013, three shipments of corn to China were rejected for the trait and by the end of 2013, every load had Viptera detected, so China, the number three importer of United States corn banned corn altogether.

"You cannot take the #3 importer of US corn out of the equation and not have a decrease in the market," DeWald said. "To what extent, we don't know. Ultimately it will be a battle of the economists to determine what percentage decrease was a direct impact from Syngenta."

At the same time, corn price went from over \$7.00 per bushel in the middle of 2012, to \$3.50 and under in the years of 2013, 2014 and 2015.

After Viptera was approved, the ban was lifted with China in December of 2014, and corn price saw a 20 percent increase on rumors of the lifted ban.

As a result, the Syngenta case has the same primary facts as the "Rice" mass action case that was won by Watts Guerra in 2011. No class action Rice cases were won.

DeWald says that since Syngenta was warned on several different cases from 2011 to 2013 that the trait would end up on the shores of China, this case will be much more significant than the rice case.

DeWald explained more details between a federal class action and the 13,500 mass action cases that have been filed in the state of Minnesota - since Syngenta's headquarters are in that state and how state cases potentially have a better result compared to that of federal cases.

The meeting also touched on how to know if the letters from other companies are legit and how to determine the difference between class action firms and mass action firms.

It was noted that only a few firms across the country are capable of handling mass action since so much paperwork is needed for each case filed individually.

He also explained the terms and conditions if farmers signed up with Person, DeWald, Deaver and Watts Guerra and explained that a settlement is hoped by 2018. DeWald hopes to have 30,000-50,000 farmers sign up for the mass action suit with Watts Guerra.

For more information you can call Nathaniel DeWald at 308-995-8848 or email nate@holdregelaw.com.

Town Hall Meeting Scheduled for June 30

At a special election in July of 2006, Arnold residents passed the Arnold Economic Development Plan and local sales and use tax of 1% by an overwhelming margin of 90 percent - one of the highest recorded in the state at that time. With the 1% tax set to expire in December of 2016, residents will once again go to the polls on September 15 of this year to decide on whether or not to extend its economic development plan and 1% sales tax.

Residents will be given an overview of where they are now concerning the plan and tax at a Town Hall meeting scheduled for Tuesday, June 30, at the Arnold Community Center at 8:00 p.m. Joe Bob Atkins will give a presentation, followed by local guest speakers talking about their thoughts on Arnold's successes. Information on the plan will also be available that night to attendees, and there will be a question and answer period.

This is Lightning Safety Awareness Week

The National Weather Service has designated this week as Lightning Safety Awareness Week. Lightning strikes the United States about 25 million times a year. Although most lightning occurs in the summer, people can be struck at any time of year. Lightning kills an average of 49 people in the United States each year, and hundreds more are severely injured.

NOAA's National Weather Service has discovered that 64 percent of lightning deaths since 2006 occurred while people were participating in leisure activities, with fishing topping the list at 26 deaths.

Of the 152 deaths associated with leisure activities, fishing is followed by camping (15 deaths), boating (14 deaths), soccer (12 deaths) and golf (8 deaths). The remaining 77 people were struck by lightning while participating in a number of other leisure activities like enjoying the beach, swimming, walking and running, riding recreational vehicles, and picnicking or relaxing in their yard. Between 2006 and 2012, 82 percent of people killed by lightning were male.

"When people think of lightning deaths, they usually think of golf," John Jensenius, a lightning safety specialist with the National Weather Service, said. "While every outdoor activity is dangerous when a thunderstorm is in the area, outdoor activities other than golf lead to more lightning deaths."

Jensenius said the large number of fishing, camping and boating lightning deaths may occur because these activities require extra time to get to a safe place. "People often wait far too long to head to safety when a storm is approaching, and that puts them in a dangerous and potentially deadly situation," he said.

Visit the NWS website <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/> for more information.

Tractor/Pickup Accident

As of press time on Monday, no information was released for the tractor/pickup accident on Highway 92, occurring on Friday, June 19. A report will be in next week's issue.



"Tarzan" Comes to Town

Crane River Theater actors interact with kids at Thursday's "Page to Stage" all-age event at the Arnold Community Center. An estimated 40 kids enjoyed hearing the classic story of "Tarzan," read by Crane River Theater's feature actors from Tarzan the Musical. The children then participated in singing, dancing and a few imaginative skits with the actors before enjoying cookies and juice provided and served by the Arnold Chamber.

The "Page to the Stage" program began on June 11 with children reading a condensed version of the Edgar Rice Burrough's classic "Tarzan" and learning about the basics of acting and reacting on stage. In future sessions, kids will read with their book groups from a choice novel, participate in a theater workshop and act out a scene from their book. Some of the theatrical lessons will include stage makeup, costumes and props - all made possible by generous donations from the Scott B. Cool Foundation and the Arnold Education Association. Page to Stage is "a new twist" on the traditional summer reading program. (Jessica Tickle photo)