



# SANDHILLS OPEN ROAD CHALLENGE

## August 9-10-11

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“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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## 18 Years and Counting...

### New blood steps up to direct SORC

By Pepper Werner  
Contributing Writer  
and Janet Larreau  
Sentinel Staff

ARNOLD - Beginning Aug. 8 more than 140 high performance cars will converge on Arnold for the 18th annual Sandhills Open Road Challenge. The open road race - only one of three in the nation and considered by far the most challenging - has new blood stepping up this year to take over the role of race director, after Shane Cool stepped down. Brock Dailey and Jeff Preston will now share the role, with Cool helping them the first year.

"Shane has been the key to our success," said Joe Shown, who was the driving force to create the SORC. "He's done a wonderful job, and we are going to miss him. There is a need for young people to take interest and step forward to help. We're old guys now, and need put out to pasture. We need new blood to take over."

Since 2001, Shane has served as the race director of the SORC. He claims it's a big title for a small amount of work.

"I only put in about three weeks of work for the event. There are other people on the board that work all year," Shane said modestly.

When asked what a race director actually does, Shane simply stated that he organizes the 35 volunteers that are positioned on the road, attends driver's meetings and makes sure the race is safe. There is certainly much more to it than that to help ensure driver and spectator safety, a timely schedule and everyone is where they are supposed to be.

With Shane's retirement from the board comes a change for the remaining members. This year Shane will help where needed, but the board has yet to decide if it will remain a one-person job or if it will take a team to make sure that



Jessica Gothard Tickle photo

Driving a '65 Cobra, Chris Thorkildsen, with navigator Barrie Larsen, wait for the red light at the 2017 Sandhills Open Road Challenge. Traveling from South Dakota, the racers competed in the 95 m.p.h. class.

things run smoothly and as simple as Shane makes it look. This will be a year of transition for all involved.

Shane credits the 17-year success to the Village of Arnold, the SORC board and the volunteers that return year after year to help. It is a lot of work for the volunteer firefighters, emergency medical team and residents, but Arnold has been reaping the financial rewards through the years to the tune of over \$1 million dollars.

"It's an incredible place when residents open their homes year after year to visitors of our community they may not even know, or it could be friendships that return repeatedly for the race. Not many small towns are like

that, I feel sure. That is one of the reasons this event is such a big success. We have a great town!" Shane stated with pride.

As race director, one of the biggest changes Shane has seen over the years is the increase in driver attendance.

"When we held the first race, there were 34 drivers. Now we have to close the registration at 135. They come from all over the United States and Canada. There are even four or five that have never missed a single race," Shane said.

The SORC race has been very fortunate not to experience any loss of life. There have been some serious accidents

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## Residents, Drivers Show Support of Am. Legion Post

By Janet Larreau  
Sentinel Staff

For years, Arnold American Legion Post 130 has been struggling financially. To keep the Post going and to maintain the Legion building, members have been collecting iron and scrap metal to sell - not an easy job for these aging veterans.

During the Sandhills Open Road Challenge, residents and drivers can help our local veterans out.

Everyone will have the chance to bid on a new Henry 22 Magnum Golden Boy lever action rifle at Saturday's SORC awards banquet. Money raised from the auction will go to the local Legion.

The rifle - which has never been fired - was purchased by Bruce Younglove at the 2016 SORC Winter Party. A long-time supporter of the SORC and the Arnold community, Younglove gifted the rifle to Ron and Nancy Cool, asking them to pick the Arnold charity they wanted the money to go to. Ron and Nancy chose the Arnold Legion.

Younglove said he did this to show his appreciation of the Arnold community.

"I think a big part of the SORC is the fact that many people of Arnold have opened their homes to the racers during the event since the beginning. No other racing venue does that," he said. "My son, David, and I have stayed with Ron and Nancy for many years and truly appreciate them and all the other folks that have taken in racers and their navigators. Thanks, Arnold. You've set a great example for other small towns to make something good happen in their communities."

**Proceeds from beer garden will go to Legion**

This year, Legion members are setting up a beer tent on the north side of the Legion building during the SORC. R.T.

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## Norma Erikson Receives 2018 Nebraska Pioneer Farm Award

BROKEN BOW - Norma Erikson received the AKSARBEN 2018 Nebraska Pioneer Farm Award last Thursday night at the Custer County Fair. Members of her family were present to take in this important moment in time that Norma's late husband, Duane, had looked forward to. The Eriksons were one of three Custer County farm families that were recognized for consecutively holding ownership of land in the same family for at least 100 years. Each honoree received an engraved plaque and gatepost marker as permanent recognition of this milestone.

The history of the Erikson farm began with Charles Erikson.

Like many immigrants, Charles Erikson took advantage of new opportunities and possibilities to settle in Custer County and start a new life in farming and ranching. Following merely a trail for 25 miles north from Gothenburg, he started a home on Tallin Table south of Arnold among other immigrants from Sweden. Despite struggles living in a sod house on the prairie, he made a life with wife Ida and his new family. Son Martin Erikson continued the farming tradition raising cattle, hogs, corn, and wheat. With wife Hazel, he was able to withstand the pressures of the depression and expand the holdings again. Son Duane Erikson and wife Norma increased and modernized the property through conservation improvements, land management, and irrigation leading to a more successful operation. Children Dan, Bruce, and Lori helped with the farming and ranching in their youth.

"This recognition would have meant the world to my father who had a great love of the land, of nature, and of local history," says son Bruce.

The AKSARBEN Foundation, along with Nebraska Farm Bureau and the Nebraska Association of Fair Managers, are recog-



Courtesy Photo

Norma Erikson (center), with children Lori Sorensen and Bruce Erikson, holds the Pioneer Family Farm Award that was presented to her on Thursday, August 2, at the Custer County Fairgrounds. Presenting the award was Shawn Lehmkuhler, Custer County Ag Society board member.

nizing 138 honorees for the 2018 Nebraska Pioneer Farm and Nebraska Heritage Farm Awards. Since its inception in 1956, 10,000 farm families statewide have received the Nebraska Pioneer Farm Award. The Nebraska Heritage Farm Award, established in 2014, has been

awarded to nearly 75 farm families for 150 years of consecutive ownership in the same family. The awards are presented during the annual county fair in which the land is located.

"We look forward to recognizing and awarding these Nebraska farm families

each year. The dedication and perseverance demonstrated by these families is a testament to the strong Nebraska values that set our state apart and have been making AKSARBEN proud, for over 120 years," said Sandra Reding, AKSARBEN Foundation President.