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Poll workers Marla Kraut (left) and Carlene Lanham point to the correct line, as Maurice Andre signs in to vote at the September 15 special election in Arnold. (Janet Larreau photo)

A Resounding “Yes”

Residents Vote to Extend LB840 and 1% Tax

About 46 percent of registered voters in the Arnold Village turned out to vote in the September 15 special election, with an overwhelming majority voting ‘Yes’ to extend both the LB840 Economic Development Plan and 1% sales tax for another 10 years.

Custer County Clerk Connie Gracey said that out of a possible 376 registered voters, 173 cast a ballot. One-hundred-fifty-eight voted for the proposed economic development program and 15 voted against. One-hundred-fifty-seven voted for the 1% sales and use tax, and 16 voted against, for an overall approval rate of 90 percent.

Nine years ago - when the plan

and tax were first put before voters - the overall approval rate was over 80 percent, with a 45 percent turnout.

Village Board Chairman Glen Bowers said the extension of both the plan and tax is a good thing for the town.

“LB840 has created jobs and created businesses. The fact sheets that Joe Bob (Atkins) presented showed how much we have accomplished in the past nine years, and I’m hoping that will continue. When you look at the towns around us that don’t have LB840, we’re leaps and bounds ahead. We’re still viable, when others are trying to stay afloat.”

Arnold Economic Develop-

ment Board President Andrew Tickle said it was a big relief to him that the majority of people who voted support what has been put in place and what has been accomplished in the last nine years.

“It was the unknown of really knowing what they thought of all the work that has been done,” he said. “It’s nice seeing the town being proactive instead of reactive.”

Tickle said the board extends a big overwhelming thank you to everyone involved, including those who campaigned, the newspaper for getting the word out there, and those who turned out to vote.

Village’s Tax Request Remains the Same

The Arnold Village Board of Trustees approved a budget of \$2,266,200.00 for the 2015-2016 fiscal year at the board meeting held on September 14. According to Village Clerk Patricia Lambert, the property tax request is \$74,640.00 for fiscal year 2015-2016. This is the same property tax request since fiscal year 2009-2010.

The levy for Arnold will be .355901. Last year the levy was .404740. Property taxes are split between the General and Street Departments. The General includes Parks, Swimming, Pool, Community Center and General Government.

The largest capital improvement budgeted for is \$325,000.00 for electrical upgrades. This includes Phase III of the Voltage Conservation & Line Rebuild Project. Phase I was completed in fiscal year 2012-2013. Phase II was completed in fiscal year 2014-2015. Approximately 23 percent of the budgeted expenditures (\$525,000.00) is for electricity purchases from Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska and Western Area Power Administration.

A total of \$98,500.00 has been budgeted for Community Improvement. This money comes from the 1% local sales & use tax. The Arnold Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees on how this money is used.

Other capital improvements include:

- \$75,000.00 for Street Improvements.
- \$20,000.00 to replace overhead doors on the street shop.
- \$25,000.00 for CIPP liner for the sewer system.

Capital Outlay expenditures include:

- \$80,000.00 for generators.
- \$10,000.00 for dumpsters.
- \$6,500.00 for a lawn mower.
- \$70,000.00 for the Arnold Roping Arena Project contingent upon donations.

AEDC Director’s Report

Cheryl Carson reported that

there is one loan that has been reviewed and ready for approval by the board. After her report, the board approved a \$15,000.00 loan and \$2,000.00 grant from the Economic Development Fund for Mills Hardware for the purchase of an electronic sign. Carson said the new sign will have a lot of new capabilities and will upgrade security.

During her website report, Carson said that work is in progress on the Visitnebraska.com site. She said that many communities are not utilizing the site, which will be very good for tourism to Arnold. Housing is moving, with offers made on several homes.

Carson attended the Solar Eclipse 2017 meeting in North Platte. Several communities have begun planning, and the official North Platte tourism website will be live soon. Each community will have their own page and area to advertise, which will include the Visit Nebraska website. Carson will be contacting groups and clubs to have an informational meeting to begin community planning for this event. At the meeting, Carson learned that people from overseas are requesting lodging. One to three-thousand people are expected to converge on the areas listed.

“Our town is already used to organizing large events, such as the Blues Festival and SORC, so this will be key,” she said.

Carson is working on bringing back Kegs and Corks for 2016. She has a verbal agreement with Kinkaiders of Broken Bow and Max Creek Winery to come to the event, and she is contacting crafters and vendors as well. She is also working on two new events for June 2016, to draw people to town.

Arnold will be hosting the Grow Custer County group on September 23. Carson will be attending the Entrepreneurship Best Practices Summit in Lincoln on October 21.

Continued on page 2.

Long-Time Restaurant Owner will Retire

As owner of the Cardinal Inn, Mary Carlson has been feeding the community hearty meals for the past 28 years. On Wednesday, September 30, Mary will finally lay her spoon down and rest - at least for a while.

Mary originally purchased the restaurant on the west edge of town from Don and Martha Wagner. At the time, she was head cook for Stapleton Public Schools, where for six years she had served some 200 students, plus the teachers.

“I wanted a restaurant, and I had looked at one in Arthur. I loved that restaurant, but my daughter (Corina) didn’t want to go to school there,” said Mary. “We stopped at Wagners in Arnold, and I asked if it was for sale. Looking back, I should have been more cagey - you don’t ask if someone wants to sell. I could have saved some money. Corina had just started high school, and she liked Arnold’s school, so I bought it.”

Mary’s buffets of such comfort foods as chicken, pork chops, fish, chicken and noodles and mashed potatoes, have drawn not only Arnold customers to her door, but people from surrounding communities as well. For several years, the Cardinal Inn has provided government-sponsored Senior Meals.

Through the years, Mary said she has had some wonderful help, and fondly remembers the high school kids who have worked for her.

“It was good for the kids to work. I bought a lot of cars - and the kids were proud of it. One girl drove the car she bought with the money she earned here clear through col-

lege,” said Mary. “I’ve had some wonderful help who helped keep me open.”

One employee Mary fondly remembers is Lois Bone, who she was close to. The story Mary likes to tell about Lois has to do with crows that congregated behind the restaurant every summer and the Crow family, who were frequent diners.

“One day I told Lois, ‘Those darn crows are here again.’ Lois looked at me, and said, ‘I thought you liked the Crows.’ I said, ‘I like them, but they are messy.’ Lois said, ‘You mean Bob and Mona?’ I said, ‘No, I mean the crows out back!’

Mary said she has “raised” a whole bunch of kids over the years in the restaurant and one of the hardest things to leave will be the young ranchers and farmers whom she has watched grow into adults.

Mary gave a big sigh when asked about her feelings of retiring.

“It’s time,” she said. “Days like today remind me why I am retiring. I only sat down for about 10 minutes. But I have so many regrets about doing it. I read in the paper that they are giving me a picnic, and I cried because it’s just really hard. They are ‘my people,’ and I am going to miss them.”

Mary said she has no list nor exciting plans for retirement, but there’s two things she’s really looking forward to.

“The thing I won’t miss the most are timers and alarm clocks. I’ve gotten up to work at 5:00 a.m. for 40 some years. I’m 71 years old, and that’s enough. I’m not saying I won’t work again some day, but for now it’s just rest,” she concluded.



Cardinal Inn owner Mary Carlson was putting out one of her last buffets last week, as the long-time business owner plans to retire at the end of this month and close the business. (Kendra Veirs photo)

School District’s Budget Increases for Negotiated Salaries, Projects

School District #89’s budget for 2015-2016, approved at the board’s September meeting, saw an increase in taxes in the General Fund of \$168,610.79. The increases were in salaries, due to negotiated agreement terms and anticipated increases in costs in most areas such as benefits.

Superintendent Dawn Lewis said Special Education costs increased slightly as well, and the school cannot predict what the reimbursement rate will be for that until next year due to the

fact that the federal government is a fiscal year behind on SPED reimbursements. Also included in the General Fund budget was \$50,000.00 for vehicle acquisition to maintain the school’s fleet, which will be placed in a depreciation fund, and \$50,000.00 for building maintenance.

The increase in the Special Education Fund was \$100,000.00. Mrs. Lewis said the school has several projects that it needs to tackle which may require reorganizing some

classroom space and looking at the energy efficiency of the buildings. There may also be some landscaping projects in the future. These issues will be discussed in committee sessions and during regular board meetings throughout the year.

Certified 2015 real estate and property valuations in School District #89 (which includes the counties of Custer, Logan and Lincoln) is \$404,627,244.00 - an increase of 23.42 percent from 2014. The increase from 2013 to 2014 was 27.78 percent.