

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

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Arnold Township Implementing Rigorous Plan to Improve Road Conditions



Courtesy photo

Pictured above is one example of the devastation to a road located west of the Arnold County Line Road in the aftermath of the historic Bomb Cyclone that swept the state over a year ago. The storm left its mark on almost every mile of roads in the Arnold Township and the township board is now faced with the enormous task of putting together a plan to rebuild and repair the roads. More photos of damaged roads are needed from residents in order to apply for a FEMA grant.

It's been over a year since the Bomb Cyclone swept across our state, and the Arnold Township continues to deal with the aftermath of its historic damage. "Of the 68 miles of county roads in the Arnold Township, the storm left its mark on almost every mile," said Township treasurer Roger Bierman. "In fact, several of the roads were so severely damaged that they were impassable for weeks and months following the storm."

The Arnold Township Board, consisting of Dan Blowers, Chairman; Tony Eggleston, Secretary; and Roger Bierman, Treasurer; began the arduous job of putting together a plan after being appointed to the board in March 2020. "We are faced with an enormous task. We need to figure out not only how to efficiently rebuild and repair miles of roads, but also locate the resources to do so in a timely manner," said Bierman.

The Township Board contacted FEMA and NEMA, the Federal and State Emergency Management Agencies and began the process of requesting assistance. "FEMA officials visited and found 80 road washouts in our district," said Bierman. The Township Board also coordinated efforts with Custer County to secure funds with a loan to begin immediate repair on sections of roads destroyed by the storm.

"We are working our tails off with FEMA and NEMA for emergency aid, but it's a process. FEMA requires proof of damage and then proof and receipts of repair after the work is complete before they will provide funding. Securing a loan from Custer County was necessary to begin work on roads that required immediate attention. The goal is to obtain FEMA funds for loan repayment. We are hopeful, but it's not a sure thing," said Tony Eggleston. "The Bomb Cyclone and other severe weather situations have made us realize how important roads are in our everyday lives. We take for granted that we can travel with ease from point A to point B. Once that is compromised, it's a wake-up call," said Dan Blowers. Ensuring the safety of Arnold's citizens has been a significant driving force in the effort to restore county roads.

"We asked the question: Could an emergency vehicle such as an ambulance or fire truck reach a rural location quickly after a half inch rain? The answer in many cases is 'no' and that is unacceptable," said Blowers. Another driving force is the additional expenses on vehicles driving roads that are substandard. "The wear and tear on school buses, farm trucks, and cars is significant and expensive. We need to do better for our taxpayers," said Blowers. In addition to coordinating with FEMA and the Custer County Commissioners, the Arnold Township's plan to rebuild and repair roads includes a request for an increased tax for roads funding. "No one likes to see tax increases," said board member Tony Eggleston, "but we want

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Two Motor Vehicle Fatalities, Homicide Reported in Custer County Last Week

The Custer County Sheriff's Office responded to two motor vehicle fatalities and a homicide last week. On July 9, at 11:25 p.m., the Sheriff's Office responded to a one vehicle accident approximately 8 miles west and 2 miles north of Callaway on the Rye Valley Road. Sydnee Sallach, 19, lost control of her vehicle and went into the ditch. The vehicle rolled and Sydnee was ejected from the vehicle. Sydnee was transported to the Callaway Hospital. Sydnee died due to her injuries. On July 11, at 1:50 p.m., the Sheriff's Office responded to a

one vehicle accident 8.3 miles north of Arnold on the Arnold-Dunning road. Melvin Babcock, 67, lost control of the motorcycle he was driving and went into the ditch. The motorcycle rolled and Melvin was thrown from the vehicle. Melvin was pronounced dead at the scene. On July 11, at 6:05 p.m., the Sheriff's Office responded to a residence on the Round Valley Road in reference to a homicide. The Nebraska State Patrol conducted the investigation. "It was a pretty sad week," said Custer County Sheriff Dan Osmond.

Custer County Fair Set for July 24-30

It will look different, but the Custer County Fair will be held in 2020 at the Broken Bow Fairgrounds. Scheduled for July 24-30, the event will focus on social distancing, sanitizing, wearing masks and following the Health Directives that are in place right now. Some classes and events that are by group or club will not be held this year and there will be no

club booths. "We are trying to put together the best event we can in the safest way. It's kind of a challenge to do that," said UNL Custer County Extension Assistant 4-H Youth Development Specialist Colleen Peterson. "Simply, we hope that people work with us on modifications

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Historical Marker Placed on Former Lumberyard Building

Another historical marker has been placed at the former lumberyard building - now housing Same24 Fitness. Berni Crow is in charge of the Rotary project and has several more in place that will be reported on in upcoming issues. The lumberyard marker reads as follows: **F. H. Gilcrest Lumber Co. - 1912** F. H. Gilcrest Lumber Company originated in Kearney and opened its doors for business in Arnold in the year 1912. It was later passed on to Gilcrest's nephew R. A. "Rad" Murray. In 1940, Murray bought out the Dierks Lumber Company and moved all the Dierks stock to his lumberyard (presently 'Same24 Fitness'). At the time of the sale, Earl Clizbe was in his 17th year as manager of Dierks Lumber yard (Triangle Lanes) that had also started their business in 1912. The first manager at Gilcrest was W. R. Horn. C. F. Brunell was the manager when Murray took over and was soon replaced by Charlie Morrow. With Marrow managing the lumberyard now, the name was changed to "Community Lumber Company", Circa 1920. The Arnold Village bought their first fire truck in the early 1940's. It was put to good use in 1946 when a fire severely damaged the Community Lumber Company's office and im-

plement department. A new implement building was built replacing the one that was destroyed; it was managed by Don Kellenbarger, while Lloyd Pierce and Ivan Lewis managed the lumber department. Charlie Morrow, former manager of Gilcrest became the new bookkeeper. In 1955, Robert and Clarence O. Romans bought the lumberyard from Rad Murray changing the name to Romans Incorporated. Both the service station (present Mighty Mart) and the implement room north of the lumberyard were part of the purchase. C.O. Romans continued to run the business after the death of his brother Robert. In 1973, Don Ambler bought Roman's lumber business (Ambler Lumber). In 1980, the lumber business was then purchased by brothers Darrell and Bob Crow. Bob's son Dave and Darrell's son in law Kevin Strasburg managed the lumber business for several years. At this time, Penny Strasburg Allen was the secretary. Dave remained at the business from 1980-2002 and, in time, became the owner of D&K Lumber and Farm Supply. During the time that Dave and Kevin ran the lumberyard, Ron and Nancy Cool put in a unique business in the former feed room. The business was managed by Brian Schwarz. They

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Courtesy photo

Same24 Fitness owners Jessica and Matt Fletcher, with kids Dagen and Charlea, stand beside the new historical marker that has been placed on their building, which started out as a lumberyard. Not pictured are Traven and Taylie Fletcher.