

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

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Courtesy photo

Pictured above is the aftermath of a fire northwest of Arnold that destroyed the house and all of the belongings of Gay Brown. A fund has been set up to help Gay, as she recovers from the devastating loss.

Gay Brown and Her Pup Escape from House Fire Northwest of Arnold

Arnold rural resident Gay Brown and her dog escaped from a house fire with no injuries in the early morning hours of Tuesday, September 8. Gay was awoken by the smell of smoke and was luckily close enough to an exit to quickly get out and call fire and rescue.

The call came in at 5:40 a.m. to the Stapleton Fire Department and in route, they called Arnold's department to the scene about 13 miles northwest of Arnold.

“The fire was actually in our

district by just a little bit,” said Robbi Smith.

Stapleton was the first on the scene and Arnold responded with three trucks and eight firemen. Tryon's department was called in for mutual aid, as the fire completely destroyed the home and its contents. A connected garage was saved.

Arnold firefighters were the last to leave the scene at 1:30 p.m. No injuries were reported to firefighters.

The State Fire Marshal determined that the cause of the fire

was lightning.

Gay lost everything in the fire and some have asked how to donate monetarily to help her out. Donations may be mailed to: Gay Brown Fire Relief, c/o Community First Bank, 324 Main St., Stapleton, NE 69163. Any donations remaining after getting what is needed will be donated to the fire departments that responded. Gay and her family are very thankful for their service and dedication as they got there as fast as possible.

School Board Approves Budget, Combined Tax Levy

Tax asking is \$3,286,871.00

The Arnold Board of Education voted 6-0 to approve both the proposed budget and combined school tax levy for the 2020-2021 fiscal year at their regular meeting held on September 8. The proposed budget is \$6,368,012.54 and the combined school tax levy will be 76.6681 cents per every \$100.00 of assessed property value. This is up from 74.0323 from last year.

Property valuations are down by about 3 percent from \$442,378,646.00 last year to \$428,714,598.00 this year.

Over \$6 million sounds like a lot of money, but in all reality, Superintendent Joel Morgan said that doesn't mean that is what the school is spending. It all comes down to where the figures go and balancing out. What taxpayers need to look at is the levy and what the tax request dollar is. The total budget includes money in the special building fund that has accumulated over the last few years to plan for expected and unexpected projects.

The District is requesting a total of \$3,286,871.00 in property taxes. That request is \$100.00 less than last year.

“We knew that we would have additional expenses in our General Fund because of added administration and other costs. Because of this, we reduced the

Special Building request. When you really look at it, the reality is that we will still be down under \$4 million in terms of what our actual disbursements and transfers were,” said Superintendent Morgan.

As far as future plans for the building, there is nothing specific right now, but the school will be ready, as it was with installing a vertical lift last year and renovating the kitchen and lunchroom prior to that.

“As we continue budgeting, our ultimate goal is to not give a specific hit to our taxpayers when there is a need. We will sit down and plan for what our facility needs. We've shown through the years that we are steady and methodical in our process,” said Superintendent Morgan.

In other action items, board members approved the Custer Capable membership for 2020-2021.

“We found value in the program as far as career exploration and career development through internships and career days. Last year, we had a CAPS class that was offered as an elective. We feel it is beneficial to our students and are making sure we have a strong connection between schools and businesses in the area,” said Mr. Morgan.

Supreme Court Issues Rulings on Challenges to Four Ballot Initiatives

LINCOLN - In decisions issued today, the Nebraska Supreme Court ordered that three gambling initiatives be placed on the November general election ballot, and that a medical cannabis initiative be withheld from the ballot.

According to statute, the statewide ballot for the November 3 general election must be certified no later than tomorrow, Friday, September 11. Secretary of State Bob Evnen announced that the certified ballot will contain three gambling initiatives and will not contain the medical cannabis

initiative, in accordance with the Supreme Court's decisions.

Evnen said, “The Secretary of State is required by statute to issue determinations as to whether initiative petitions are legally sufficient. I did my best to make those determinations on a timely basis in accordance with law. Today the Supreme Court issued its decisions concerning these petitions. I respect the rule of law and I will certify the ballot in compliance with the Court's orders.”

Evnen added, “I note that the

Continued on page 2.

Applegate Foundation Grant Enables School Library to Expand Makerspace



Courtesy photo

Ella Cool and Berklee Preston experiment with the Cricut machine in the school's expanded Makerspace area in the library.

Arnold students have been exploring, creating, imagining and learning by engaging in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math activities in the media center's STEAM makerspace area. Some of last year's popular projects include a robotic hand and arm, balloon rockets, a hovercraft and an electric glowbug. The elementary-aged, science-based makerspace kit area was created with a donation from the Arnold Education Association i (now-retired) Science teacher Gerry Swingle's name. Elementary students “earned” completing the makerspace project when reaching their reading goals.

This year, a grant from the John Russell Applegate Foundation, managed by the Mid-Nebraska Community Foundation, was used to expand the makerspace area for high school students, as well as elementary students. Mrs. Moninger, who applied for the grant last spring, also used some of the memorial money from her parents, Ron and Donna Dunning, for station storage furniture.

After receiving the Applegate funds, the school purchased two cricut machines, two cricut essential tool sets and several cricut cutting mats, along with some card stock. Students

Continued on page 2.

Signs of Fall



Raising Money for a Good Cause

(Above) The family of Keith and Jodi Carlson were busy in their gourd field last week preparing for a fundraiser for the Arnold School Food Backpack Program. The family ended up filling a trailer full of gourds (pictured below) of all sizes, shapes and colors. The trailer was pulled in front of Brew-Bakers Coffeehouse on Saturday morning, where residents chose their favorites for a free-will donation. A total of \$554.00 was raised that day.

