

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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The Wait for Nebraska Rural Broadband Is Over

Several senators, representatives visit Arnold to learn about pilot project

By Janet Larreau

Bringing public LoRaWAN to the farm and allowing users to deploy sensors, access real time data and make on-demand decisions to improve their operation was the main focus of an event held last Thursday in Arnold.

Gathering at the community center to learn about the pilot program were several state senators, representatives from Governor Ricketts and U.S. Senator Deb Fischer's offices, several members of the Rural Broadband Taskforce, ESU, and representatives from state agencies and public power districts.

The event started out with a meal sponsored by Great Plains Communications and Custer Public Power. AEDC Director Cheryl Carson was the on-ground coordinator in setting up the meeting and the meal, with several local establishments asked to be involved.

The group was welcomed by Arnold Village Board Chairman Glen Bowers. Julie Bushnell, president of Paige Wireless, and Jerry Prange, business development, gave an overview of the pilot project.

Several speakers covered other topics, including: the Nebraska Cooperative of Internet Service Providers, Broadband over Cropland, and the Internet of Things (IoT) and its importance to groundwater.

During a tour of Robbi Smith's farm west of Arnold, the group experienced true rural e-connectivity and witnessed the benefits of broadband over cropland by learning how different devices that have been set up there collect data.

“Paige Wireless has built the first statewide LoRaWAN network in North America in Nebraska. With the town of



Photo/Debbie Connelly

(Pictured center) Julie Bushnell, president of Paige Wireless, and Jerry Prange, business development, answer questions about demo devices placed at the Robbi Smith farm west of Arnold last Thursday.

Arnold and surrounding rural areas being the focal point of its first pilot project, in a very short time Paige has demonstrated that leveraging new technology with existing resources can span the rural digital divide this country has

been trying to solve for decades,” said Julie Bushnell.

Great Plains Communications is providing back-haul fiber for Paige Wireless to complete the project.

“We have had the privilege of serving businesses and homes

in Arnold for many years. This particular initiative will increase access to Smart Ag technologies for the Arnold and surrounding area farmers, which is a win all around for both Arnold and the state of Nebraska,” said Janelle Allison,

chief operating officer for Great Plains Communications.

In a recent Op-Ed released by Senator Deb Fischer, she said the exciting partnership going on in Arnold highlights exactly how precision agriculture can benefit the state of Nebraska.

Village Board Approves Agenda Items That Will Benefit Town

The Arnold Village Board of Trustees had a full agenda to go over at their meeting held on October 12. Several of the agenda items involve future improvements in the town.

AEDC Loan, Grant Approved

Board members approved a \$15,000.00 loan from the Economic Development Fund to Midwest Kustoms, LLC, to purchase the building at 110 East 7th Avenue and a \$2,000.00 grant to accompany the loan. Both loans were recommended by the AEDC.

They also approved authorizing a check to the Arnold Economic Development Corporation upon closing for the purchase of real estate south of the post office de-

scribed as Original Town Block 6 Lots 1-4. The Board approved the AEDC's request to purchase the real estate at a special meeting held on August 24, with the goal of gaining ownership, removing unsafe structures and planning for future development for the community. The money for the purchase and its associated costs (\$27,472.00) will come from the Arnold Economic Development Fund.

Merry-Go-Round Purchase

AEDC Director Cheryl Carson gave the Board a check for \$5,309.60 from the AEDC for the purchase of a merry-go-round for the city park. The money came from donations and fundraisers. Board members approved issuing a check

for \$7,848.00 to Sterling West for the merry-go-round, which was included in the 2020-2021 budget.

Consideration of Renaming City Park

Board members considered returning the name of the Arnold City Park to the original name of R.E. Allen Park. A letter, received from the great-grandson of R.E. Allen, original founder of the town, was submitted and follows:

“My name is Dennis McGuire. I am a Great Grandson of Richard E. Allen the founder of Arnold. This letter is on behalf of myself, my living cousins and by proxy our beloved deceased parents and siblings. We have all spent time in Arnold (almost all were in attendance at the Centennial celebration when our parents were Grand Marshalls) and take great pride in our family history.

The purpose of this letter is to ask that the Board please return the name of the “Arnold City Park” to the “R.E. Allen.” This land on which it sits was given to the town by him (along with the land for the public schools and the Methodist Church) in the early 1930's from the “R. E. Allen Addition”.

The family is open to discussion of costs and possible funding for a new sign. Please do not hesitate to approach us on that matter.

We are excited that the Rotary Club has plans for a plaque to be placed at the park. Having the plaque would mean so much more with the park name being back as it once was.

Our parents were proud of the name formerly given to the park. They are gone but not forgotten and we would like to make things right in their memory.

We welcome any comments, questions or requests for information.

Respectfully
Dennis McGuire

1268 Piazza Lane
Clovis, CA 93612”

AEDC Director Cheryl Carson said that she has been in contact with Dennis McGuire, who has emailed several photos and information.

“We don't know when or why the name was changed from R.E. Allen Park to the Arnold City Park. I have had a lot of comments from people not wanting to change the name,” said Chairman Glen Bowers.

Suggestions were made on designing a sign and placing it at the park that would honor R.E. Allen. The Board asked Carson to contact McGuire to get his opinion about putting the following on a new sign: Arnold City Park - Founded by R.E. Allen. Her conversation and the design and wording on the sign will be discussed at the November 9 meeting.

CAC Resignation

The Citizen Advisory Committee has accepted the resignation of Ken Wehrman, who has moved to Texas, at their July 13 meeting. Board members appointed Kathy Halstead to fill Ken's unexpired term.

Letter Presented by GPC

Ian Taylor, District Manager of Great Plains Communications was at the meeting to discuss the relationship between Big Red Communications, Great Plains Communications and Paige Wireless. He said there has been some confusion between the companies and presented the following letter to the Board:

“Community of Arnold,

On behalf of Great Plains Communications, the Nebraska Cooperative of Internet Service Providers (the Cooperative), Big Red Communications and Paige Wireless, we set for the terms in which e-connectivity and Internet service will be provided to the Community of Arnold.

The community of Arnold and city office buildings will

maintain their current Internet services from Great Plains Communications.

The Cooperative will work in collaboration with Great Plains Communications to enhance wireless connectivity for community needs such as wireless cameras, WiFi hot spots and provide internet service to patrons that are outside of city limits who desire wireless service.

Paige Wireless will work with the community to establish use cases and applications for the Internet of Things, such as but not limited to, leak detection, smart meters, and water sensors.

It is our honor to work with you and we are grateful for the opportunity to advance the Community, increase efficiencies and attract new businesses who would like to call Arnold home.”

Taylor said that it is not really a partnership with Paige Wireless and Big Red Communications but it is more of a customer relationship. GPC provides Internet to the tower south of town. GPC, Paige Wireless, and Big Red Communications have come to an understanding of the service of town. The understanding is that the community of Arnold and city office buildings will maintain their current Internet services from GPC. GPC is 100% backing of their Precision Ag Program and things they have going on that way and also providing Internet to the customers that GPC does not have fiber to within a couple miles of town. Taylor said that Big Red Communications can still provide monitoring of the wells and installation of cameras - that does not interfere with anything that GPC is doing.

After Taylor spoke, the Board considered the Access Point Provider's Agreement with Big Red Communications (BRC) to

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Courtesy photo

State Bound

Placing 3rd at the recent MNAC meet, Arnold senior Landyn Cole has qualified for the NSAA State Cross Country Championship and will represent the South Loup Bobcats in Kearney at 12:00 p.m. on October 23.