

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

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Photo/Debbie Connelly

Cousins Travis Eastwood (left) and Robert Meredith have opened a new body shop in the former John Deere Central Implement building south of town.

New Body Shop Opens

By Janet Larreau

A new service opened for business in Arnold at the end of October. Located in the former John Deere Implement building south of town, Midwest Kustoms will offer auto body and equipment restoration and repair.

Owners Robert Meredith and Travis Eastwood said they chose the building – and the town of Arnold – for a reason when they entered into their new business venture.

“We chose the building for its size. We don’t just want to specialize in cars and vehicles, we want to paint the big stuff,” said Robert. “Arnold seems like a pretty fast growing community, and to me, they kind of welcomed us with open arms as far as the business goes.”

Robert, 44, and Travis 43, are cousins and auto body work seems to run in their blood. Robert’s grandfather, Pete Schoene, owned a Pete’s Body Shop in Callaway for years, and

their uncle, Gary Eastwood, owned a body shop in Callaway as well. Travis worked for Gary and has 20-plus years of experience behind him. Robert earned a degree in Auto Body Tech from Mid-Plains Community College before going into the oil field. He also helped his grandpa out in his younger days.

“We were always in Pete’s Body Shop when we were kids,” said Robert.

Besides vehicles, the “big stuff” includes painting pretty much any heavy equipment – tractors, grain carts and combines. They will also offer auto detailing and a 24-hour locksmith service. To add to their business, the partners work for Titan Industries, restoring Bobcats for re-sale.

Robert said Arnold Economic Development Director Cheryl Carson has been a big help and still is.

“We couldn’t have replaced her in this situation in getting the loans and everything. She is the best. She’s always right

there if we call or need anything,” he said.

The partners spent a lot of time getting the building ready to open, hauling off three dumpsters of trash, cleaning extensively, fixing some water and electrical issues, and mowing and cleaning up the outside. They’re still fixing as they go and the improvements will continue. They have installed a big wood burning stove to help cut down on utilities and will be in the process of creating a showroom.

“Everybody is wishing us the best of luck and is nice and accepting. We’re about a month or a month and a half out right now, but we are taking on new projects,” said Robert.

Robert and Travis are planning an open house on December 12 and will serve food for a free-will donation that will be donated back to the library. Watch for more details about the open house in an upcoming issue of *The Sentinel*.

Vacancy filled on Village Board, city park will be renamed

At the Arnold Village Board’s regular meeting held on November 9, members voted to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Tim Turley. Chairperson Glen Bowers nominated Zach Hagler to fill the vacancy for the balance of the unexpired term and all were in agreement. The oath of office will be administered to Hagler at the December 14 meeting.

City Park will be renamed

A decision was made on renaming the city park. The subject was brought up at the October meeting, after the family of the town’s founder, R.E. Allen, requested that the name of the park reflect the fact that Allen and his wife had donated the land to be used as a park. Board members gave their approval to move forward and work with the family on name suggestions. AEDC Director Cheryl Carson, who has been communicating with the family, was unable to attend Monday night’s meeting. She gave a name the family had agreed on for the board to consider in an e-mail message.

She said that at the previous meeting, the word “founded” was suggested, but unfortunately, would not be an accurate descriptive word to use in the name. Although Allen and his wife did donate the land to the Village specifically for a city park to be created, and at one time the park bore his name, R.E. Allen Park, Allen founded the town, but not the city park. The park is now called Arnold City Park, so the proposal presented was to change the name to R.E. & L.L. Allen Memorial City Park.

“I feel this would be the most accurately stated and easiest solution for the name of the city park,” said Carson. “The word ‘Arnold’ may not be necessary in the title, since it is the only city park we have in our small

community and would make the name too long and be quite a mouthful to say. However, I think retaining the portion of the current name city park would work to maintain the locality of the park in conversation in our community. This change/compromise would give respect and honor to the donor of the land for the park we now have because of his generosity.”

Carson included a mockup of how a new sign might look. Board members voted to change the name of the park to what was proposed and gave Carson permission to get estimates for a new sign.

Water Tower Access Point

In an item tabled from last month, Board members were set to consider the Access Point Provider’s Agreement with Big Red Communications to build a deployment for wireless internet on the Village’s water tower. Chairman Bowers said that he doesn’t know if BRC still wants to use the water tower for their equipment, so the matter will be put back on the agenda if the company wants to use it.

Storage Units request

Dennis Conner’s request to build storage units at 512 S Carroll (Parcel #697100) was considered. At the last meeting, the Board instructed Village Clerk Patricia Lamberty to contact Village Attorney Mike Borders to see if the cost involved in rezoning can be charged to the applicant, and at this meeting, were told that it can. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the rezoning application and then make a recommendation of approval or disapproval to the Village Board. In turn, the Village Board will also hold a public hearing on the rezoning application.

See Vacancy Filled, Page 8

Community Foundation Dinner & Auction Cancelled

On-line auction will be held at a later date

Due to the increase in positive COVID-19 cases in the area, the Annual Community Foundation Fund’s Fundraising & Auction Event, scheduled for this Saturday, November 21 at the community center, has been

cancelled. Tickets that were purchased in advance will be refunded.

There were many items donated, and an online auction will be held at a later date.

New Directive Health Mandates Go Into Effect as COVID-19 Cases Continue to Climb

LINCOLN - WED., NOV. 11 - The latest statewide case total is 87,733 as of November 10. There were 70 new COVID-19-related deaths in the state over the last seven days, for a total of 730. A total of 49,761 Nebraskans diagnosed with COVID-19 have since recovered.

Daily hospitalizations over the last seven days increased by 187, for a total of 860. The daily average of positive cases for the last seven days is 1,953, compared to a daily average of 1,240 last week, and 852 and 838 cases in prior weeks.

“I want to stress the sense of urgency due to the current conditions we’re experiencing in our state. We have hundreds of Nebraskans hospitalized due to COVID-19 and cases continue to climb, which will result in additional COVID-19 related deaths,” said Dr. Gary Anthonie, Chief Medical Officer and Director of Public Health for DHHS. “Our behaviors matter. Our choices matter. We know what we need to do to slow the spread of the virus and help maintain available care for the people who need it. Wear a mask when you’re around people you don’t live with. Avoid situations involving the 3Cs – crowded places, close contact and con-

fining spaces and wash your hands regularly.”

New Directed Health Measures

Effective Wednesday, November 11, a new Directed Health Measure (DHM) is in effect for the entire state until Nov. 30. The DHM outlines several restrictions to help limit virus transmission in the public domain and protect hospital capacity.

Social distancing: Nebraskans are required to keep six feet of distance from other parties at any indoor gathering, including restaurants, bars, churches and fitness centers. Residents of the same household are considered a party only for churches, weddings and funerals.

Capacity restrictions for indoor gatherings: Auditoriums, libraries, theaters, sports complexes and arenas up to 10,000 people, and all other indoor spaces are to operate at 25 percent capacity.

Restaurants and bars may operate at full capacity as long as six feet of distance is maintained between tables. Parties are restricted to groups of eight, and patrons must remain seated unless ordering, using

the restroom or playing games. Those playing games must wear a mask when not eating or drinking.

Churches and places of worship may operate at full capacity but must maintain at least six feet of distance between households, and outdoor venues may operate at full capacity.

Masks required in close contact businesses: staff and patrons are required to wear a mask at any business where close contact occurs for more than 15 minutes, including: salons and barbershops, massage therapy businesses, and tattoo parlors, as well as bowling alleys and pool halls.

Limited spectators at indoor sporting events: fans at indoor school and club-sponsored youth events are limited to the household members of the participants.

Indoor dances are not permitted: dancing at wedding receptions is permitted if other individuals remain seated at their tables.

Thanksgiving preparations: Nebraskans are encouraged to adapt holiday plans in light of the ongoing pandemic.

To celebrate safely, consider

altering Thanksgiving traditions to include only those in your household, deliver food to high-risk friends and family or those unable to attend in person, and choose to shop online with favorite merchants instead of in stores.

Those hosting or attending gatherings are encouraged to keep them small and local, plan to be outside if weather permits, wear masks if meeting those from outside your household, and avoid contact with non-attendees in the two weeks before and after your gathering.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more suggestions to help adjust traditions available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>.

Anyone with COVID-19, or who may have been exposed to COVID-19, should avoid in-person gatherings, as well as the three Cs – crowded places, close contact and confined spaces.

COVID-19 testing via Test Nebraska

All Test Nebraska locations and the Test Nebraska hotline will be closed on Thursday, November 26 for Thanksgiv-

ing, and re-open for regularly scheduled hours on Friday, November 27. There will be no interruption in lab services during the holiday.

Those who may have been exposed to COVID-19 or who are experiencing symptoms can receive a free test through Test Nebraska. Symptoms can include a fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, tiredness, muscle aches, headaches, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea.

Visit testnebraska.com, or use TestNebraska/es for Spanish, to schedule an appointment at one of more than 60 Test Nebraska locations across the state. Nebraskans with general questions about testing or who need help completing the online assessment can call the Test Nebraska hotline at (402) 207-9377.

State contact tracing update

Contact tracing is an important tool to slow the spread of the coronavirus. It starts when a positive test result is reported to the state or local health department. Next, a trained contact tracer calls the person who tested positive for COVID-19.

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