

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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Courtesy photo

An employee of Heartland applies acoustical tiles that were custom designed and built to fit the Rialto Theatre on Thursday, August 26. That weekend's moviegoers were the first to test the new sound system.

New Sound System Installed at Theatre

By Janet Larreau

Moviegoers that attended the showing of "Silo" were the first to experience a new sound system that was installed at the Rialto Theatre that week.

Rialto Theatre Board President Mary Becker said Friday night, August 27, would be the big reveal and she would be there to hear if it truly made a difference.

Improving the sound quality at the theater had been discussed for a few years and research was done a couple of years ago on installing a hearing loop - a project that specifically targets folks wearing hearing aids.

"We recognized attendance of our senior population was declining and that there were increasing comments about the echo during movies," said Becker. "We also investigated a couple of other innovative ideas that were being used at out-of-state theaters and are good projects, but not exactly what we wanted for the Rialto. We upgraded part of our speaker systems about two years ago, which is all we could afford at the time."

Most of the research on improving the sound system was done prior to the pandemic. Once it hit and the theater was closed, the project slowly faded out of sight, but it never totally died.

"Ron Cool called me one day this spring to say he and Nancy wanted to help finance the project to greatly increase the sound quality. They believed the hard of hearing folks were just not coming to the theater and they were concerned about its future. This was just the catalyst I needed to revive the project. The three of us got together and had a productive conversation with lots of ideas and Ron

did a lot of research," said Becker.

Fundraising for a new sound system started in April of 2021 with a grant request submitted to the Custer County Foundation. Grant requests were also submitted to Rotary, SORC, and the Arnold Community Foundation. Becker said the theater keeps statistics on the ages of folks who attend the movies and the number of movie patrons. This information, along with movie patron comments, was used to show the need for an improvement project.

Total cost of the project turned out to be \$10,793.90 - \$1,000.00 more than the original bid due to pricing changes - especially with the spike in lumber prices. The original bid was all covered with grant money and private donations, but the theater is about \$1,000.00 short of having the entire project paid for at this time.

"Arnold is very fortunate to be in a community where service projects are highly valued. SORC, Rotary, the Arnold Community Foundation, and the Custer County Foundation were all very generous with their support of this project," said Becker.

In the beginning stages, prior to grant writing, research was done by looking around on the Internet for acoustical tiles, which seemed like the best option to improve sound quality. With so many options, it became obvious that help would be needed in placement of the tiles to give the sound quality desired.

The theater has had a long-standing relationship with Heartland Company out of Iowa - a company that provided tech support for the theater since it re-opened 20 years ago. Since they have developed their company into a full range

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2020 Census Shows Arnold's Population Is Stabilizing

Results of the 2020 Census have been released, showing Arnold's population at 592 residents. From 2010 to 2020 the town's population change was -5 - a percentage change of only -.08. It's something most residents have realized for a long time now - more young people are making their homes here and having children and more people are moving in, making up for population loss in

deaths.

While everyone would like to see growth, the slight loss is good news compared to previous decades which showed greater losses in the population. From 1980 to 1990, the population change was -134 (-16.5 percent); 1990-00 was -49 (-7.2 percent), and 2000-10 was -33 (-5.2).

Custer County's population dropped to 10,545, compared to

10,939 in 2010.

In surrounding communities, the census shows that:

Callaway's population is 563, a 4.5 percentage gain from 539 in 2010.

Stapleton saw a drop in population from 305 in 2010 to 267 in 2020 - a -12.5 percentage change.

Broken Bow's population is 3,506 compared to 2010's 3,559 - a -1.5 percentage change.

North Platte's population is 23,390 compared to 2010, when the population was 24,733 - a percentage change of -5.4.

Nebraska's population is 1,961,504 - an increase of 7.5 percent. It's now the 37th largest state, after moving up one spot. This is the first time since the 1900 census that Nebraska has moved up in the U.S. ranking. A 7.4 percent growth rate is ranked 21st

among the states. The state saw more people move to Nebraska (in-migration) than leave (out-migration). It will maintain the current three seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Nebraska households returned 2020 Census forms at a very high rate. Self response ranked 4th highest in the nation.



Courtesy photo

Remembering the Fallen 13

Local businesses showed their respect for the 13 American soldiers who were killed in a suicide bombing Thursday, August 26, near Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport in Afghanistan. Grazer's Bar & Grill (above) hung 13 American flags from their building's awning - a sobering reminder of the lives that were lost as all American troops were pulled out of Afghanistan and the Taliban took over, ending a 20 year war - the longest in America's history. One of the 13 fallen soldiers - Cpl. Daegan Page, a 23-year-old Marine Corporal, of Omaha, graduated from Millard South High School in Nebraska. Other businesses that are known to have shown their sorrow and respect were Jake's Horses & Harleys Grille, that reserved 13 spots in their business and sat out beers for the soldiers, and BrewBakers Coffee House, that hung a patriotic banner with 13 coffee mugs in their display window. Residents also showed their respect, flying their flags at half-mast.