

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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“We’re All In The Same Boat”

Retailers seeing inventory issues due to major disruption in supply chain

By Janet Larreau

Four County Boutique owners Makenna Johnson and Tammy Weinman are watching closely, as UPS and FedEx drivers make their stops in Arnold each day. They’re waiting for products to arrive for the Christmas shopping season, which is fast approaching.

They’re not alone. Supply chain bottlenecks at the world’s largest shipping yards are causing problems for large and small retailers across the U.S., and ultimately, consumers. Some believed that the bottlenecks that affected the global supply chain in 2020 would be mostly cleared by now, but it’s worse – much worse.

“We went to a small market in August, and that’s what we’re waiting on,” said Makenna, who is preparing for her second holiday season as a small town retailer. “We’re starting to slowly get stuff in. Some of the items I ordered are still stuck in a ship somewhere, and I don’t know when we will be getting those. I’ve been on the phone with reps, and they don’t even know when they will get them. We’re all in the same boat.”

Still, Makenna said out of town shoppers have told her that she has a decent variety of items to choose from compared to other small town boutiques. It makes her feel better that she has something to offer.

“We want to encourage people to shop local, especially with the trouble with shipping. The more that you can shop at our smaller stores, the better,” she said.

At BrewBakers Coffee House & Gifts, there have been some delays and back-orders, but fortunately, the bulk of the products are in. Jodi, who opened her doors in August of 2018, went to market last January in Dallas and placed her Christmas order at that time. Early ordering may be the reason the business received most of their items when other retailers are still waiting.



Photo/Debbie Connelly

UPS driver Jeff Smallcomb makes a delivery to BrewBakers in Arnold last Friday, where employees were ready and waiting for the shipment. Jeff, who has worked for United Parcel Service at the Broken Bow location for many years, said he hasn’t noticed the disruption in the supply chain at all, working 9-10 hours a day, five days a week. He used to make deliveries to Oconto, Callaway, and Arnold, but with the rise of online shopping, more drivers were hired, and he now only serves the Arnold community and its surrounding area, which he requested. “I am a senior (employee), which allows me to choose. I love Arnold,” he said.

I am optimistic for the holiday shopping season. With delays in shipping and receiving merchandise being reported, we feel very fortunate. I am so grateful for those who continue to show their support and shop

local as best they can,” she said.

The co-owner of Sugar Sand Boutique, Bobbi Starr, said they have been trying to simplify things and have everything they need - for now.

“It’s not just Christmas. We

order stuff for the boutique, and it may be six months before we get it in - if we get it at all. If you have your eye on something, I would suggest to get it now.”

Mills Hardware manager An-

drew Tickle said they aren’t doing too terribly bad and are keeping up. They see their busiest holiday time about ten days before Christmas down to the last minute, as women come into buy their significant other a Milwaukee tool.

“With our main hardware distributor, we have been seeing a 46- to 53 percent fill rate in the last three months. For example, if he orders 500 different skews, he’s getting about half of those. Winter commodities - such as the good seller Dryshod work boots - is where they foresee an issue.

“We definitely struggled in March and April of this year, pulling from different suppliers to make it work,” said Andrew. “We’re hoping that we’ll have garden hoses next spring. It’s a simple thing like that. Normally, we look two to three months ahead. Now we’re looking six months ahead. We just got stock tanks in today that were ordered in June. It’s a mess. I think what’s happening is a lot of retailers are trying to make it work, but there’s no more hiding that we have an issue. They’re running out of all avenues to get product. It comes down to a combination of labor, transportation, and reliance on foreign and not domestic. Even things made in the USA will typically have a global component. I would suggest to anyone looking to buy, if you could find your commodity, buy it now. Availability or cost is not going to get any better. It’s not a scare tactic it’s the reality of where we’re at.”

For other businesses, such as grocery stores and restaurants, the story is much the same.

“It’s just the supply chain and getting the products to our warehouses,” said Reed’s Food Center owner John Reed. “Because of a shortage of drivers, they usually don’t arrive on time; they might show up three weeks later. It’s not that bad now; it just depends on if the manufacturers can get jars for their spaghetti sauce or cans for their vegetables. It’s looming in the background.”

How to Build a Tipi: 101



Courtesy photo

Arnold 4th graders and their teacher, Katie Blowers, experience sitting inside of a genuine tipi at the Arnold Recreation Area in an October outing for the class that included setting up the tipi. Pictured are: back (l-r) Para educator Miss Rebecca, Avery Corbin, Berklee Preston, Paityn Dailey, Mrs. Blowers, Montana Baldwin; middle (l-r) Braxton Green, Carlee Smith, Addison Dalrymple, Jose Jr. Melendez, Parker Strasburg, Dagen Fletcher; front (l-r) Jaxsen Schacher and Ethan Jarmin. “It was such an enjoyable and educational experience. They would have stayed in there all day if I would have let them. Several of the students took their families out after school to show what they had accomplished,” said Katie. Turn to page 8 to read the full story.

Village Board Goes Over Agenda

At the October 11 Village Board meeting, AEDC Director Cheryl Carson reported that she gave Planning Commission members an update on plans for the Harris lots south of the post office at a meeting held on the 11th. She told commission members about the application for the CDBG Planning Grant to update the outdated 2007 Comprehensive plan and to update Arnold’s zoning ordinance.

The AEDC is working with the Central Nebraska Economic Development District (CNEEDD) WorkForce Development/Good Jobs Challenge project. On behalf of CNEEDD, the AEDC sent a quick survey to Joel Morgan at Arnold Schools and businesses in Arnold to acquire input in the CNEEDD district on the workforce climate.

She also reported that guidelines for a grant application from the motor vehicle sales tax account have been sent to Village Attorney Mike Borders for review.

Dog Problem Discussed

Andrew Tickle asked the board what a person is supposed to do if they have a vicious dog in their yard. “What is the liability factor if the owner has been warned and the dog bites another person?” he asked. Andrew discussed the problem with the Custer County Sheriff’s Office and was

See Village Board, Page 8.