

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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Photo/Debbie Connolly

Mills Lawn Service owners Dena and Terry Mills pass on the hose to new owners Casey Cozad, daughter Emma, Nicole March and son Braxton, as they get set to take over the 20 year business now named Green Acres.

Mills Lawn Service Sells to the Cozad Family

Young couple is ready to carry on the 20-year business.

By Janet Larreau

Terry and Dena Mills announced this week that they will be selling their lawn service business to Casey Cozad and Nicole March.

The Mills' started Mills Lawn Service in April of 2001 with just 23 customers in Arnold using a utility trailer with a 300 gallon tank and a '71 Ford pickup. The couple did all of the mixing and spraying. Twenty years later to 2021, the business served 550 customers with two 500 gallon spray trucks and five employees, counting Terry and Dena, who were still spraying with a pump, hose and spray gun. They also offered bare ground or total kill spraying services and had 200 customers and a spray rig for that. By 2015, the company began spraying two loads every day. The area covered was large, with customers in Arnold, Gothenburg, Stapleton, Brady, Thedford, Merna, and Anselmo, as well as many

rural customers in the areas around those communities.

A typical day for Terry started at 4:00 a.m. to do final mixing before employees showed up at 6:00 a.m. to be briefed on the day ahead and then head out to spray. After the spraying was completed each day, Terry refueled and/or repaired and began the mixing process for the next day.

In the early days, daughters Briana and April helped drag the hose. As the business grew, Andrew Tickle and Jessica Tickle faithfully worked through the years. Andrew did all of the book work using a computer and spreadsheets. Dena was in charge of customer contact.

As they sell their business, Terry will not miss the 4:00 a.m. starts, and Dena won't miss dragging the 300' long hose.

Terry and Dena said they decided to sell the business because their hardware business has grown – especially Milwaukee tool sales, as well as the green houses and feed busi-

ness.

“After 20 years, it is time to let someone with a younger mind and legs take over,” said Terry. “We plan to devote more time to our other businesses and once in a while, perhaps find a day to spend fishing at the lake. We are excited to sell this business to Casey and Nicole because we believe they are committed to the same standard of quality lawn care and customer service that we have become known for. Casey worked with me in the 2021 lawn season and expressed an interest in purchasing the business. We have been approached by much larger out of town lawn care companies, but we wanted the purchaser to be local as we felt that our local customer base would not be serviced properly. We are confident Casey and Nicole are ready and able to pick up where we left off.”

Terry will be working with Casey and Nicole to answer questions as they get started. Terry and Dena will continue to provide bare ground spray-

ing services.

New name, new owners, same great service

Casey, who has lived in Arnold on and off over the past 20 years, relocated to Arnold from Colorado with fiancée Nicole mainly due to the pandemic and safety for their family and immune compromised daughter. Leaving a food truck business in the mountains that had unexpectedly taken off, and plans to build a restaurant, they purchased a home here from Brenda Sheets sight unseen. Casey has known the Mills family for years, and last season, worked with Terry and Dena spraying.

“Early on, when Casey first started spraying with Terry, he came home one day and said, ‘They’re going to offer to sell me the business.’ Even though I used to hate to admit it, he’s right about a lot of things and this was one of them,” said Nicole.

After asking advice from Casey’s brother-in-law Joe Bob Atkins, who said it was a “no brainer,” they made the agree-

ment.

“The Mills offered us an amazing opportunity and we were not the only ones who wanted it, but they chose us. So we all prayed on it and here we are,” said Nicole.

The couple chose the name Green Acres for their business and lucky for them, the name wasn’t taken.

“Actually, I thought it was funny,” said Casey, referring to the song/show. “A man who loves farming moves his NYC wife to the country. Nicole happens to be from Saratoga Springs, New York, where Oliver is from on the show. We have started watching it since the name and it’s quite good!”

The couple is purchasing all of the equipment and buildings and adding on some new, used equipment this season.

“We are so grateful to Aaron, Jessica, and the ladies at Pinnacle Bank. This could not have been an easier transaction,” said Nicole.

“Although I did shadow and train with Terry for the season last year, you do have to get licensed and certified by the state and there are different sectors you can become licensed in. There’s a lot of computer and paperwork to learn, as well,” said Casey.

As far as employees, Casey and Nicole will be working with family the first year. Son Braxton, and niece Macy will be helping, and daughter Emma will be riding on the side-by-side giving them orders. A few locals are standing by, as well.

“Our goal is to grow the business that the Mills’ family created in a sustainable manner and in the future be able to provide jobs and careers for local people,” said Casey.

Green Acres will be offering the same services the Mills have of five spray applications. Casey refers to Terry as “the brewmaster” and will be using the same chemicals and recipe that he has created and used on his lawn for all these years. For the 2022 season, they will also be adding core aeration and overseeding. Sign up, invoicing, and Bill Pay will now be available on-line and the business will soon have a website and Facebook page up and running. They are about to start aerating and overseeding. If the ground is thawed, they will be

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School Board

Approves Raise for Teachers

The Arnold School Board approved a Teacher Negotiated Agreement at their regular meeting held on February 7, giving teachers a \$800.00 increase on their base salary.

With regret, they accepted the resignation of music teacher Kallie Bush and will be looking for a new teacher to replace her.

Board members approved the Continuity of Service Plan. The document is required to qualify for COVID relief money and is reviewed every six months.

In other business, the Board:

- Voted to list the ice machine, along with a walk-in freezer, as surplus property and advertise on Big Iron.

- Heard principal’s report on past and upcoming activities.

- Heard Superintendent Joel Morgan’s report that new carpet has been installed in the pre-school and new doors have been installed on the east side of the elementary.

Community Speech Night Is Feb. 28

The Arnold High School Speech Team will host Community Speech Night on Monday, February 28, at 7:00 p.m., at the Rialto Theatre. Everyone is invited to attend and hear the team members’ speeches as they progress through the season.



Courtesy photo

The historical Farmers State Bank building is now owned by the Strasburg family: Jailyn, Parker, Justin and Piper. When last in operation, the location was known as Archie’s Cafe.

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