

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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Aksarben Farm Family Awards for State Created Right Here

School House Graphic Products receives contract after resident makes inquiry.

By Janet Larreau

Each year, the Aksarben Foundation presents Farm Family awards at county fairs across the state of Nebraska. Many people might not be aware that for the past two years, these prestigious awards have been made right here in Arnold by students working for School House Graphic Products (SHGP).

How SHGP got the contract to create the awards is pretty interesting, and started with Arnold resident and retired teacher Berni Crow, a fourth generation landowner who was in possession of an old and faded Nebraska Pioneer Farm Award presented to her father and mother back in 2000. The farm was homesteaded in 1899 by Berni's great-grandfather, was passed down to her grandmother, and then her parents, James William Johnson and Agnes Dorothy (Codr) Johnson. When they passed away, Berni and her sister became the owners of the 401 acres near Callaway. Berni and husband Dave bought her sister's half of the farm, and are now sole owners.

“When it's passed on to our children, that will be the fifth generation on the homestead, so you see why I wanted to keep the farm,” said Berni. “Now, the farm has been in our family from 1899 to 2022, a total of 123 years. Dad had had a stroke, and the day he received, he cried. I knew in my heart that I had to have a new sign made in honor of my family's continued ownership.”

When she noticed how faded the sign had become outside, she e-mailed and called the Knights of Aksarben Foundation, and told them about the poor condition of the sign. At that time, she wanted to get Aksarben's permission to have the Arnold school-based business, School House Graphics Products make the sign for her. Ak-



Photo/Debbie Connelly

School House Graphic Products students Bailey Schwarz (holding the outdoor Nebraska Pioneer Farm Award and Nebraska Farm Heritage Award) and Gracie Neth (holding the indoor plaques) are standing in front of the laser printer where the signs and plaques are created. SHGP has a contract with the Aksarben Foundation for the past two years to create the signs that are awarded each year at county fairs across the state.

sarben asked further information about the business, and as Berni says, “The rest is history.”

Aksarben expressed their excitement of finding a school-based business that could take over the job of making the signs. Also, since it's school-based, they cannot make a profit, so the signs could be made at the cost of expenses. The Foundation contacted SHGP about two years ago, asking if they would be willing to take on the farm awards project.

The Foundation felt it would be a “great fit” for students to be making the signs, especially if those students came from farm families themselves.

SHGP instructor Katie Burgland said that with the contract, students produce about 150 farm award signs that are given out each year at county fairs. This number includes both the Pioneer Awards and the Heritage Awards. The Pioneer Award is given to families

who've owned the same property for 100 years. Each family receives two awards – a white sign with blue lettering to be placed outside on a post, and a wooden plaque with black lettering printed on gold metal to be placed on a wall indoors. Fewer Heritage Awards are included in that 150 total because these awards require that the land has remained in the same family for 150 years. Both outdoor and indoor Heritage Awards are printed on black

with gold lettering. The Heritage signs have “150 posted inside an outline of Nebraska at the top, whereas the 100 year award signs have a covered wagon at the top.

“I was so grateful when (Aksarben) told me that they wanted to pursue the idea of having SHGP take over. It has worked well for all of us,” said Berni, who will no doubt treasure her parents' original Farm Family signs.

Up For A Game Of Pickleball?

New court built on North Carroll Street

By Janet Larreau

Last week, sisters Bryn and Bailey Schwarz were the first to have fun trying out the sport of pickleball on the newly built court on North Carroll Street. Once only used to play basketball, the outdoor location is now offering a different recreational activity for young and old alike.

Pickleball – described as a cross between ping-pong and tennis – is currently the fastest growing sport in the U.S. Bringing the sport to Arnold was the brain-child of Jimi Cole.

“For our employee welcome back in January at Mid-Plains Community College, Barb Baldrige, a USA pickleball ambassador, gave a presentation on pickleball and how popular it has become – not only in North Platte but in the U.S., and this gave me the idea that maybe we could get this going in Arnold,” said Jimi.

Jimi got her mom, Pam Long, on board, and their first step was attending a village board meeting. Jimi happened to be out of town for the first board meeting, so Baldrige came over from North Platte. She and Pam made the presentation. Some adjustments to the plan had to be made to lower the cost, and it was presented again the next month. Board members agreed to give \$2,000.00 from the Edna B. Peterson Estate memorial fund.

Sally Hilderbrant heard that the project was being worked on, and gave Jimi the name and number of her sister and brother-in-law who own a

painting company in Kansas City that specializes in specialty paint that is required for this type of project. Jimi got in touch with the company, and they were kind enough to give her a discount.

Jimi and husband Jeff started painting the court on July 11 and finished on the 13th. Jimi said it took a lot of measuring and re-measuring to make sure they got the dimensions all cor-

rect. The couple put up the net, and the court was ready to go.

The court and net are provided, but those wanting to play will have to provide their own balls and paddles. These can be purchased on-line or at the Sports Shoppe in North Platte. There is a difference between indoor and outdoor pickleballs, so that is something to make note of when purchasing them.

“Arnold is always very supportive of activities and improvements taking place within the community. Multiple people stopped by while we were painting to ‘check it out,’ and ask questions, and while most have never played pickleball, they were very curious as to what it was like. We're glad to see some life being brought back to this space,” said Jimi.



Photo/Debbie Connelly

Jimi Cole and her mom, Pam Long, get set to play pickleball on the new court located on North Carroll Street. The new recreational opportunity was made possible with funds from the Edna B. Peterson Estate and volunteer labor provided by Jimi and husband, Jeff.

Theater Volunteers Are Cooling Off Thanks to ACFF Grant

By Janet Larreau

With an extended heat wave gripping the area, Rialto Theatre volunteers have been staying cooler while they serve concessions thanks to funding from the Arnold Community Foundation Fund (ACFF).

An LG ductless heat pump was installed in the lobby area on July 14 at a cost of \$3,240.00. The initial cost was covered by the ACFF donation, and the theater picked up the cost of the electrical work out of their budget. Theater Board President Mary Becker said that Jess Klein was thinking ahead when she installed the heat pump in the projector room, and made room for expansion. So, without something unexpected happening, the cost should be very reasonable.

The pump will improve conditions in several ways.

“Before the heat pump, the popcorn oil would freeze, along with the volunteers. During the summer, the chocolate candy melts, as do the volunteers,” said Mary. “It is hoped that the heat pump will contribute to cooling the screen room, which is only cooled by two dehumidifiers and ceiling fans.”

The Rialto Board of Directors has taken steps to improve the temperature in the meeting room and lobby over the years. They've installed new window coverings with funding from the Custer County Foundation.

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