

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

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Drought Conditions Worsen In Our Region



Arnold Fire Chief Andrew Tickle, who was on a rig with Grady Lashley (pictured fighting a fire) snapped this photo on April 23, 2022, west of Hays Center, Nebraska, while AVFD members were on a mutual aid call. The Arnold Department helps cover a wide area as part of three mutual aid districts.

Arnold Fire Fighters Respond to 25 Calls Since January

By Janet Larreau

A drought is persisting in our region, with 100 percent of Custer County categorized by the NIDIS (National Integrated Drought Information System) as D1 or moderate. Pasture and growth are stunted and surface water levels have declined.

Close to 60 percent of the county is in a severe drought. Crop yields are low and fires are increasing. Well levels are dropping, mandatory surface water irrigation restrictions are being implemented, and water use is high.

In an interview last Friday, September 9, Arnold Fire Department Chief Andrew Tickle commented that he wouldn't say for sure, but 2022 has to be right up there with 2012.

“With all the wind we got this spring, I would say it has been the windiest year I have seen in my short time on earth,” he said.

Fire calls are up quite a bit

over the past couple of years, with the department answering 25 since January, compared to 17 in all of 2021. Thankfully, they've been mainly mutual aid calls, when one of the department's mutual aid districts calls for help on a fire. The AVFD is part of three mutual aid districts that cover a lot of square miles of area, including Custer County Mutual, Sandhills Mutual, and Mid-Plains Mutual.

The largest fire the department has been a part of so far would be the 739 Fire down by Arapahoe/Elwood that burned around 35,000 acres.

“Going into the fall, who knows for sure, but the weather service in a couple of our meetings have told us to expect dry weather throughout the rest of the year and that we are in a La Nino. They didn't see anything kicking us out of it soon,” he said.

People should be really careful in the months ahead. Just last Thursday, 9-8-22, there was a red flag warning, which

means it is peak fire day. People are taking their cattle out of pastures and as harvest starts, Tickle would say people need to be extra cautious with how dry it is and all the dry fuel that its out there to burn.

“Our district has pretty much avoided fires thus far, and that's just how it worked out. Thankfully, we are a little bit better than Southwest Nebraska, but it is still not good. It wouldn't hurt to keep a tote of water around filled and ready if needed,” he said.

The Department is blessed to be one department and the fire and EMS are together. There are 25 members, and nine of them are EMT certified. Some firemen/firewomen have taken extra training classes for the fire and rescue side. Current members are: Andrew Tickle, Gregg Tickle, Robbi Smith, Cameron Meyer, April Tickle, Donnell DeLosh, Lee Eastburn, Dell Cerny, Darren Weinman, Justin Mousel, Jason Jenkins, Brady Weinman, Grady Lashley, Brock Dailey, Dawson

Hanna Miles, Amanda Wehnes, Dalton Swopes, Tammy Weinman, Heather Hagler, Cassy DeLosh, Jane Fieldgrove, Susan Nelson, Jackie Meyer, Rudy Vickers, and Tom Dennis.

The Department is always in need of help. It needs active fire/EMS department members that are willing show up and put in the time, day or night.

Tickle said, “I think some people may be shocked to know just how much time it takes up of a person's time in a given time, if they are active and show up to calls, meetings, training, and public events when available.

“I have always had the view of a volunteer department is that you volunteer to get on and then you show up if at all possible. That means sometimes our family and co-workers have to fill in and pick up the slack. I would like to thank them for that. With that being said, why do I do it? Personally, I like helping others and being there to help in time of need. I have always thought if I were in

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- Andrew Tickle
AVFD Fire Chief

need of help, I would want someone to be there for me. So why don't I do it, too? Plus, for some of us, it is just in our blood to do it. Volunteer departments are having a very hard time across all of Nebraska with getting/having active members on their departments. I also would like to thank the department members, their family, their employers and rural board publicly. Because without them, we wouldn't have the department we have.”

Fall Festival Is This Saturday

Organizers and community volunteers are preparing for this Saturday's Arnold Fall Festival, with new and returning activities scheduled throughout the day - all at the city park.

The parade, which begins at 11:00 a.m., always draws a big crowd. Will this year's theme of “80's Slogans” out-do 2021's theme of “Old School?” We're hoping so, because last year's was one of the best in recent memory.

Della Dailey and Robin Dailey, who co-organize the festival with RT Green, are leaving nothing to chance. They came up with a list of 40 - 80's slogan ideas and stopped by every Arnold business, handing out the entry forms with the list attached. The girls then returned to the businesses this week and picked them up.

Line-up for the parade will be at the Methodist Church at 10:30 a.m., with judging and awards taking place at 10:45 a.m., where prizes will be awarded. The parade will then go around the park. After the parade, Casey and Nicole Cozad will serve a free-will donation barbecue.

Meanwhile, after the parade, kids can enjoy the free rock wall and bouncy house, petting zoo by the Western Riders and Tail Twisters 4-H Club.

A talent show will begin at 12:30 p.m., put on by the Arnold Food Pantry. Entry for the talent show is one canned

food item.

At 1:00 p.m., an Amateur Cornhole Tournament will be held. This fundraiser will benefit the Basketball Bible Camp. Prize money will be awarded for 1st and 2nd places. There are limited spots available at \$20.00 per team, so call or text Paige at 636-6142 or Sandi at 636-0830 to register or with any questions.

From 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., there will be face painting by the Arnold Art Club. There will be many yard games that are sponsored by NHS and Jr. High HS.

Golf cart races will start at 2:30 p.m., and the Redneck Olympics, Double D Slingshot, and Toss Buddha Belly Balloon Relay will follow.

Vendors are encouraged to set up at the park on Saturday. A Historical Marker Scavenger Hunt will conclude this week. Please refer back to the September 8 issue for more details or contact Renee Bubak at 308-870-3214 for more information. For the complete schedule, please turn to page 8.

Village Board to Hold Budget Hearing Sept. 19

The Arnold Village Board of Trustees will hold a Budget Hearing on Monday, September 19, at 7:00 p.m. The proposed budget is \$2,602,280.00 for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Approximately 17 percent of the budgeted expenditures (\$440,000.00) are for electricity purchases from Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska and Western Area Power Administration. Capital Improvement Expenditures include:

\$54,385 - Street Improvements
\$54,635 - Cedar Street Improvements (500 - 800 Block)
\$10,980 - Hillcrest Street Improvements (300 Block)
\$190,375 - Water Improve-

ments 2022 Project
Capital Outlay Expenditures include:

\$40,000 - Used ¾ Ton Pickup
\$45,000 - Used Trash Truck (Cardboard and for a Backup)
Some of the other expenditures include:
\$56,000 - Comprehensive Plan/Housing Study/Blight Study
\$53,500 - Building/Facility Maintenance (Village Office / Community Center/Power Plant/Building North of Town)
\$65,500 - Professional Fees (Attorney/Auditor/Engineer)
\$83,700 - General Insurance & Bonds
See Budget Hearing, Page 8



Courtesy photo

Success at the State Fair

Jaden Baker-Welch, along with several other Western Rider 4-H Club members, came home with awards from the Nebraska State Fair, which was reportedly one of the most successful years to date.

Held at Fonner Park in Grand Island, the fair drew over 287,000 people, who took in the rides of the midway, food vendors, and exhibits. Please turn to page 8 for local results.