

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 2026

CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

(USPS 032480)

SINGLE COPY: 75 CENTS

VOLUME 109, NUMBER 30

AVFD Annual Recap

By Tammy Weinman

January began with several of our members taking the Firefighter 1 Class. Classes in January consisted of SCBA, extinguishers, hose work, ropes, search and rescue, drags and carries, wall breaks, ladders, water supply, and forcible entry.

We started February out with a fire on February 3 and ended with one on February 24. The fire on the 24, the Eureka Valley fire, lasted for several days, along with other fires in the same area of Custer County. We also had more Firefighter 1 classes where we trained on ventilation and nozzles. The state of Nebraska was in a red flag warning most of the month. We also held our awards banquet at the end of February. Fireman of the Year was Andrew Tickle, Runner-Up Fireman of the Year was Robbi Smith, EMT of the Year was Tammy Weinman, and Runner-Up EMT of the Year was Cassy DeLosh. Years of service pins were Cassy DeLosh 10 years and Tammy Weinman 25 years. Retiring after 42 years was Lee Eastburn. Mike Bailey was our guest speaker for the banquet.

March entered with roads being closed in the area due to snow and blizzard-like conditions. Five EMT's attended the NEMSA EMS Conference in Kearney. Those attending were Andrew Tickle, Jackie Meyer, Heather Hagler, Cassy DeLosh and Jane Lashley. A group of homeschool children toured the fire hall on

80 Ambulance Calls 28 Fire Calls



Arnold Volunteer Fire Department officers and joint officers for 2026 are: (back, l-r) Robbi Smith, president/assistant fire chief; Gregg Tickle, assistant fire chief; Andrew Tickle, fire chief; (front, l-r) Heather Hagler, assistant rescue captain; Tammy Weinman, rescue captain; April Tickle, secretary/treasurer. Not pictured: Cam Meyer, vice-president. - Debbie Connelly photo

March 19. There was a fire at the time of the tour and the students got to witness our firefighters in action as they left for the fire. Our Firefighter 1 class was winding down at the end of March with training on salvage tarps, sprinklers, interior attack, and car fire simulation. Several prescribed burns were held at the end of March also.

In April, members of the fire department were given a tour of the school by Joel Morgan so we could be aware of where things are located in case of an emergency at the school. Those testing out on Firefighter 1 were Dalton Swoopes, Grady Lashley, Tammy Weinman, Cassy DeLosh, and Andrew Tickle. The skills test was administered on April 12 and the written test was on April 16. Everyone passed the Firefighter 1 class. Cassy DeLosh and Tammy Weinman received their Firefight-

er 1 certification with Firefighter 1 and Hazmat Operations classes complete (both are required for the certification). Several more prescribed burns took place in the area. On April 23, the governor issued a state wide burn ban for the state of Nebraska. Arnold's first fire truck, a 1920 Model T was on display at the Nebraska State Volunteer Firefighter's Museum in Kearney.

May 15th brought another fire northwest of Arnold. We celebrated EMS Week with 10 EMT's on our roster.

On June 9th, Arnold Fire Department had the privilege of escorting the EMS Memorial from Stapleton to North Platte. We were able to train on the new grass rig in June. This was a much needed grass rig for the department. We had our annual training with the lifeguards at the pool on June 25.

July 2, the Arnold Fire

Department was recognized for being Pediatric Ready by the State of Nebraska. We hosted a training on Helmeted Rescue: High speed accident response techniques for the county with Mike Bailey instructing the class. This training was in preparation for SORC. We lost a long-time member of the fire department, Lee Eastburn.

August always brings the Sandhills Open Road Challenge. We had several members help with the Loup to Loup, Shootout and the Sandhills Open Road Challenge. We announced the winners of our gun raffles. Winners were Derek Rose, Terry Mills, and Ann Vettel.

In September, we participated in the parade for the Fall Festival. We had an active structure fire on September 22.

October brought fire prevention. The theme for this year was Charge into Fire Safety. The ele-

mentary students came to the fire hall for the program this year. Lessons on the science and safety of lithium ion batteries, fire science, how to use fire extinguishers on live fire, touring the fire station, and seeing the fire trucks and ambulances were taught by members of the department and the State Fire Marshalls Office. We did some training on drafting on October 9.

The department was treated to a meal provided by Pinnacle Bank at our monthly meeting in November. November also brought elections for the department. All officers remained the same as there were no nominations to run against the present officers. Andrew Tickle will remain the fire chief for another year. Robbi Smith will take another term as president along with Cam Meyer as vice-president. April Tickle will remain the secretary treasurer for

2026. Joint board members will be the same with Heather Hagler, Grady Lashley, Gregg Tickle, Robbi Smith and Andrew Tickle serving on the board. Other officers that are appointed will remain the same with Tammy Weinman as rescue captain, Heather Hagler assistant rescue captain, and assistant fire chiefs Robbi Smith and Gregg Tickle.

On December 8 at 6:38 a.m., the fire department was paged to a garage fire, a single-family residence. Mutual aid was provided by Stapleton and Callaway fire departments to help with the structure fire. The house was considered a total loss. Several people helped provide food and refreshments for the firefighters on scene. The Arnold Rural Fire board purchased a new command vehicle for the department. The department

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2025: The Year In Review

This week the *Sentinel* continues it's Year In Review:

SEPTEMBER

Charleen Romine, granddaughter of Nellie (Layton) Twist, made a stop in Arnold to donate items to the Arnold Area Historical Society for the future museum.

Casey Cozad and his helpers were taking on the big challenge of cleaning up four lots on Woodland Drive.

The Village of Arnold was awarded a \$208,271 Nebraska State Arboretum grant for removing and planting trees in town and at the ARA.

Arnold Schools held its third community engagement meeting on a potential facility, presenting "Option F" that would come in at an estimated \$15.5 million.

The Ned Pelster family, including wife Jenny and three kids, purchased a home and property in Arnold and brought a new business to town, NP Crop Solutions.

Arnold Community Foundation Fund members presented checks to four local organizations as part of matching funds in the Give 4 Custer County campaign, totaling \$37,287.50 to support these local projects.

With citizens from across the county in attendance to express their views, the

Custer County Board of Supervisors made the decision to keep the Custer County Recycling Center open, and include it in the 2025/26 budget.

The Arnold Cardinal Marching Band was one of the highlights of the Fall Festival parade entries. The all-day event was packed with food, games, and competitions at the city park.

Brook Bierman and Crew Witthuhn were crowned Arnold High's queen and king of Homecoming.

Custer County Legion Commander William Schaad presented Mike Harvey the 2025 Custer County Legionnaire of the Year award at Legion's annual convention.

OCTOBER

Bill and Cheryl Holt and Ted and Julie Young were featured on their front porches, as retiring couples returning to their hometown.

Junk Jaunters from Nebraska and several states made a stop in Arnold to search for treasures.

The Village of Arnold passed a budget of \$2,688,480 for fiscal year 2025-2026.

With help from volunteers, the Arnold Cemetery had seen several improvements since spring, under the direction of cemetery board member Dena Mills.

A new red and white sign, designed by ACFF intern Bryn Schwarz, was guiding visitors to Old Mill Park.

Cattle prices were hitting all-time highs – described as an unprecedented market due to historically low cattle numbers.

Stones were set at the Arnold Veterans Memorial, with 511 names listed on each of the four markers. A fifth marker was also set for more names to be added in the future.

AVFD held its annual fire safety program for kids at the fire hall.

Dahlia Valley Ranch owner Lisa Nelson of Arnold was the recipient of the Custer Economic Development Ag Innovator award for 2025. Eli Rogers was the recipient of the Custer Economic Development Corporation Junior Wheelhorse Award.

Long-time Custer County Clerk Conni Gracey announced her retirement.

Drew Bowers of Bowers Small Engine Repair found room to grow with the purchase of a large shop and property from Randy Connell.

AEDC Director Cheryl Carson gave village board members an updated on the planned downtown sidewalk project.

Chamber's Halloween Trunk or Treat and Carnival had a monstrous turnout, with kids and

parents filling up main street.

High AR Point earners had the chance to tell their principal "Eat It or Wear It" at the Arnold Recreation Area.

NOVEMBER

Rotary compiled a historical marker book titled "A Journey Through Time – Arnold, Nebraska Historical Markers" from research done by Berni Crow that was now on sale.

It was reported that the food pantry was seeing an increase in demand, with twice as many people coming in.

Chamber brought back the housing tour, with 127 ticket holders touring four homes.

Arnold Jr. Honor Society members were lighting up Koubek Gardens for the holiday season.

Local veterans were telling their story through an exhibit set up at the school as part of Veterans Day activities. The play, "Not Too Far Distant," brought to Arnold through a Nebraska Humanities Foundation grant, drew a large crowd at the school, and the annual Veterans Day Program – held the next day – also filled the stands.

Corn being picked by Cool Farms was making its way to Gothenburg and on to the FritoLay

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Records Shattered

Pinnacle Bank's temperature reading was hard to believe on Christmas Eve Day, with an 84 degree reading. Families were enjoying outdoor activities, with one family reportedly canoeing.

The US National Weather Service of North Platte announced on December 24 that daily high temp records for Christmas Eve were set across much of the area, with some records being beaten by as much as 15 to 16 degrees. North Platte's new record was 72 degrees, compared to the old (1922) record of 62 degrees. Broken Bow recorded a high of 76 degrees, breaking the old record of 60 degrees, also set in 1922.

In Memory

The following deaths were recorded in the *Sentinel* in 2025:

Mary "Cyd" Miller - Edward Johnson
John "Jackman" Groenke - Kathren Crow Henry
Maryalice Sheets - Lindy J. Smith
Bonnie Lee Smith - Richard Duponcheel
Linda Lynch Kastens - Edward Tullis
Bobbie Smith - Lynee Johnson
Lois Johnson - Charles Delp
Dennis L. Conner - Mary Ellen Cooley
Lee Eastburn - Jeani Davenport
Bruce Younglove - Dean Lewis
Trenton Wienke - Verla May
Kendall Oerter - Carmen Croghan
Michael Lind - Colt R. Uranobvsky
John Sheets - David Pinkerton
Janice Life - Gloria Lehmkuhler
Shirley Bassett - Lana Pearman
Chris Hough - Karolyn Duponcheel
James Leonard