

# The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026

CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

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## Just the beginning...

### Class of 2026 say their goodbyes at A.H.S. Commencement

Twelve seniors received their diplomas at the 113th Annual A.H.S. Commencement held on Saturday, May 9. Wearing caps and gowns in the class colors of black and candy pink, the Class of 2026 filed into the gymnasium and took their seats on stage under their class motto taken from 1 Corinthians 16:13-14: “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.”

After his welcome, Superintendent Joel Morgan introduced the class salutatorian, Eli Rogers, who gave an entertaining speech on roads and challenges and the lessons learned as his classmates got behind the wheel in high school.

“Brook likes to take everything nice and slow to make sure there is no accident. Yes, we have all followed her, and yes, we might have all passed her. Brook continually

teaches us to take life at our own pace. Slow and steady must not be in the Bierman genetics because the only thing you can say about Paxton is his acceleration is exceptional. He teaches us that a good plan executed right this second is better than a great plan that we never get around to.”

Eli continued by saying, “The road of life is winding and twisty and there will be ditches that people will roll into...snow drifts that people back up into...light poles that people won’t see... Now switching gears a little, the only way that we’ve been able to have these experiences is thanks to our community and teachers who were always clearing obstacles in our course, filling our tanks with encouragement and helping steer us while improving our navigation skills. You have been there to jumpstart us, to live up to our capabilities and



From students to graduates, members of the Class of 2026 turn their tassels at Saturday’s commencement exercises. - Debbie Connelly photos

we are eternally grateful for every single person and we cannot thank you enough.”

Mr. Morgan then introduced the class valedictorian, Crew Witthuhn, who thanked everyone for supporting the class through their years in school, and gave a shout-out to his large family – especially his mom and dad for

showing him the value of hard work. He recalled funny times, where sometimes he and his classmates got in trouble.

“One time I lit Mrs. Goodenow’s hair on fire. I’m not sure how many people can say they have lit their principal’s hair on fire and got away with it, but I am now a part of that number,” he said.

He went on to speak about how everyone’s future would look a little different from that moment in their successes and struggles. He also spoke about the importance of risk taking, quoting an unknown author: “Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

The following scholarships were awarded by Mrs. Ashley Nansel:

**Brook Bierman**  
George & Bernice Halstead Memorial Scholarship \$1500  
Nebraska Career Scholarship \$5000/year  
Sandhills Outreach Charity Scholarship \$1000  
American Red Cross Scholarship \$500  
Callaway Hospital District Foundation Scholarship \$1000

Devil’s Den Motorcycle Rally Scholarship \$1000  
Rotary Scholarship \$500  
**Paxton Bierman**

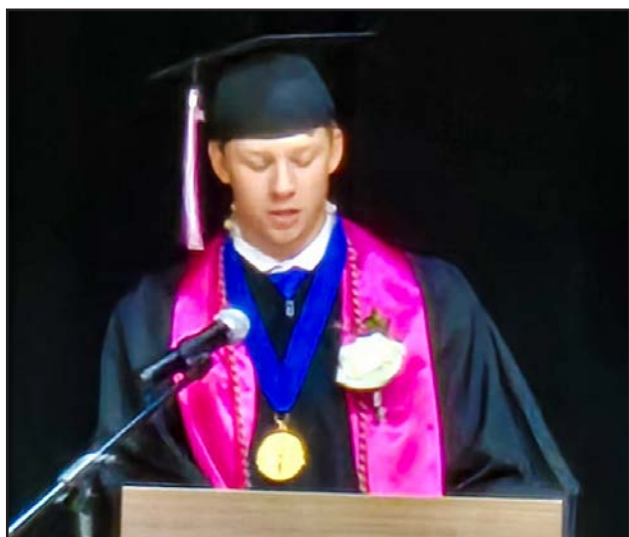
Sandhills Outreach Charity Scholarship \$1000  
Rotary Scholarship \$500  
Alvin Story Scholarship \$100

**Serenity Borah**  
Sandhills Outreach Charity Scholarship \$1000

**Eli Hunt**  
Sandhills Outreach Charity Scholarship \$1000  
American Red Cross Scholarship \$500  
Julia Crawford Pool Scholarship \$100  
Susan T. Buffett Scholarship \$9,500

**Jami Lamphear**  
Sandhills Outreach Charity Scholarship \$1000  
**Madelyn Logsdon**  
Van Hoy Scholarship \$15,000  
Performing Arts Scholarship in Theater and Choir \$15,000

See AHS Commencement, Continued on page 6.



Crew Witthuhn delivers his valedictorian speech.



Eli Rogers addresses his classmates during his salutatorian speech.

## The Arnold Command Vehicle Project

Many individuals work together to bring vehicle to service



Standing beside the AVFD’s new command vehicle are: Austin Bellin, Tom Dennis, Andrew Tickle, Tammy Weinman, Dave Smith, Robbi Smith, Dalton Swopes, Cam Meyer, Jackie Meyer, Cassidy DeLosh, Heather Hagler, Dell Cerny, Jane Lashley, and April Tickle. - Courtesy photo

### By AVFD Fire Chief Andrew Tickle

In 2014, our department was fortunate to receive a generous contribution from the SORC Winter Party, which allowed us to purchase a used vehicle to serve as our command vehicle. Over the years, this vehicle has been an essential asset—used for meetings, trainings, traffic control, fire scene command, and many other departmental needs. Recently, we reached a

point where we had to decide whether to continue investing in the aging vehicle or move forward with a replacement. After careful consideration, the Rural Board made the decision to begin searching for a pickup that would better suit our needs.

Once we found the right vehicle, the Rural Board purchased the pickup, and the members of the fire department took on the task of building it into a fully functional command unit. This included

installing emergency lighting, radio systems, a command console, and all necessary accessories. By completing the work ourselves, we were able to significantly reduce costs.

We are incredibly grateful to the SORC Winter Party for once again supporting our department with a generous donation toward this project. Additional funding came from our annual raffle, where a portion of the proceeds helped cover the remaining outfitting expenses.

The project took several months to complete due to product lead times and the hands-on work involved by volunteers. While there are still a few finishing touches we need to finish, the vehicle is now in service and has already proven to be a valuable resource for our department.

This project would not have been possible without the dedication of many individuals. A special thank you goes to: Dave Smith for helping

lead multiple aspects of the build

Grady Lashley for the many hours he contributed

April Tickle for assisting with the graphics

Tanner Pehrson for his help throughout the project

Robbi Smith for providing shop space and helping with many things

The command vehicle is one of the most utilized units in our department, second only to the ambulance. We are proud to

see this project coming to completion and are thankful for the continued support from the Rural Board, our raffle participants, donors, and the entire community.

It truly takes a community working together to make projects like this possible, and we are deeply appreciative of that support.