

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

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Planting for the Future

New trees are taking hold in the community

The community of Arnold is seeing results from a Community Forestry Infrastructure grant from the Nebraska State Arboretum (NSA), with new tree varieties taking root this fall. The \$208,271.00 grant will fund the three year project of cutting down old trees and planting new ones.

In year 1, which runs from December 1, 2025, through November 30, 2026, dead, dying, and diseased trees were identified and cut down last December and January. Now, planting has begun and will continue through the end of November. Jeff Kennedy from Kennedy Landscape Services LLC out of Gothenburg is the tree provider and chooses the varieties.

“The easiest way to think of this is that 2026 is year 1, 2027 will be year 2,

and 2028 and will be year 3,” said Mary Becker, who wrote the grant. “The routine is that trees are cut down in January and new trees are planted in the fall. The only thing that changes is where we cut down and where we plant, including public areas, residential, and non-profit areas. We actually have trees being planted from three sources: The big tree grant, ten free trees grant, and trees purchased by the Village.”

Following are the areas and the variety of trees planted:

Arnold Cemetery: (All have been planted using the 10 free trees grant. No more trees will be planted at this site.) Three Caddo maples, two Turkish filbert, four Chinkapin oak, one Choice City Chinquapin oak.



Jeff Kennedy (left), owner of Kennedy Landscape of Gothenburg, and employee John planted a greenstone elm at the Arnold Recreation Area last week. The elm is one of many variety of trees that have been planted at the ARA over the past few weeks. - Debbie Connelly photo

Arnold Recreation Area: (15 trees total with the big tree grant will be planted.)

The following have been planted: Five True North Kentucky coffeetrees. These

moderate growers have been planted on the south side of the entry road and will form a canopy.

A Burr oak and a Chinkapin oak at the playground. More trees will be planted at the playground and in the horseshoe camp-

ground on the south side of the lake.

The Village purchased five bald cypress trees which have been planted across the road from the playground in a swampy area.

Other areas:

There will be trees planted at the Catholic Church, the American Legion, Allen City Park, and at Carroll Street Courts. In addition, trees will be planted at seven different residential homes.

Nebraska Ballot Issues Overview

The November 3 General Election is fast approaching. On the ballot will be statewide ballot measures which are published in their entirety on page 8 of this issue. These measures will be published for three consecutive weeks leading up to the election.

Below, Paul Hammel, retired senior reporter for *Nebraska Examiner*, provides an overview of these measures to help voters make their decision.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment 1: to expand term limits for Nebraska state senators from two consecutive, four-year terms to three consecutive, four-year terms.

FOR – Limiting legislators to two, four-year

terms (or eight years) isn’t enough time for representatives to fully understand, and act on, complex issues. Term limits also shift power from elected officials to lobbyists, staffers and political parties.

AGAINST – Limiting representatives to two, four-year terms – which was adopted by voters in 2000 – gives others a chance to serve and limits the fund-raising advantages of long-time incumbents. Term limits also bring in more fresh ideas.

Initiative 440: would amend the Nebraska Constitution to allow betting on sporting events via Internet sites operated by state-licensed racetracks.

FOR – Legalizing online sports betting would gen-

erate an estimated \$166 million a year extra for property tax relief. The state is losing money to other Internet sites because more than 100,000 online betting accounts already exist in Nebraska.

AGAINST – Online wagering is one of the most addictive forms of gambling, and legalizing it would increase problem gambling and bankruptcies. Such gaming hurts young men and low-income families the most.

Initiative 441: sets up the regulatory framework to govern online sports betting.

FOR – This initiative directs the State Legislature to establish rules to regulate online sports betting via Internet sites operated at licensed racetracks

in Nebraska.

AGAINST – Online sports betting is addictive and will increase problem gambling and associated bad outcomes. Nebraska doesn’t need it.

Initiative 442: Amends the State Constitution to block biological males from participating in sports designated for fe-

males, women or girls by all public, private and postsecondary schools in Nebraska

FOR – This would enshrine, in the Nebraska Constitution, restrictions on transgender athletic participation that were passed by the State Legislature in the 2025 “Stand with Women Act.” Claus-

es in the Constitution are harder to overturn.

AGAINST – The initiative is unnecessary because Nebraska law already blocks biological males from participating in sports for women and girls. Such restrictions intrude on private family decisions and impact very, very few cases.

Deadline for Grant Applications Fast Approaching

(Custer County, NE) The deadline to submit grant applications to the Custer County Foundation is October 31, 2026.

The Custer County Foundation, Inc. aims to improve the quality of life in the Custer County area

by supporting the needs of the communities. Any nonprofit organization that falls under the guidelines of the Foundation’s grant policy can apply for a grant from the Foundation. Funds are usually granted in civic, culture,

health, education, environment, and social services.

Last year, the Foundation awarded grants to 34 Custer County non-profit

See **GRANT APPLICATIONS** page 2.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Matt Fletcher

Age: 45

Position Sought: Arnold Village Board

Non-Incumbent

Occupation: Business owner

Biography

Matt Fletcher has resided in Arnold for 15 years, while spending his childhood four miles south of Arnold for 17 years. In between, he mainly lived in Wyoming and then came back to Nebraska. He is married to Jessica Fletcher, who works at Pinnacle Bank in Arnold. Matt is CFO of Same24 Fitness and co-owns a miniature dachshund company, Fletcher Doxies.

His family includes: Dagen Fletcher, a freshman at Arnold High School; Charlea, a 6th grader at Arnold Public School; Traven, a sophomore at UNK; and Taylie, a sophomore at Valentine High School.

Why are you running for Village Board?

I initially was asked to run for a spot on the board, and after some time thinking about it, I decided that as a person who cares about their community, what better way to serve them than to do it at a committee level.

I understand that decisions need made in a somewhat quick, yet intelligent manner for not only today, but two, three, five years down the road as well.

In our community, I believe there’s room for improvement. Small businesses helping small businesses, and in doing so, giving the members of the community what they need or want at a decent price/timeframe that helps everyone keep the money whirling around in our community as much as possible. I believe doing that will bring more pride to the community and to the businesses, and that will pour over to the younger generations and build from there.

I would like to see the mindset and how we see each other change. I would like to see our community realize or embrace that change does not have to be bad. It usually is hard, but it also is usually worth it. Also, there’s a saying we’ve all heard that says, “If you can’t say anything nice, then don’t say anything at all.” I think all people could change that to, “If you can’t say anything nice, positive or for forward progression at any level, then don’t say anything at all. If you’ve never worn the shoes of your neighbor, don’t act like you have.”



Finish Line Is In Sight



Looking south on the west side of Walnut Street, the downtown sidewalk renovation project was nearing completion as of Monday, with more work to be done at Reed’s Food Center and the bank. With almost total access to the new sidewalks, AEDC Director Cheryl Carson said she has been receiving good feedback from residents, who are enjoying the safer walkway. - Debbie Connelly photo