

SEWARD COUNTY *Progress*

Seward County Independent
The Milford Times
January 26, 2022

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Goehner
Milford
Pleasant Dale
Seward
Staplehurst
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Utica



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STEPHANIE CROSTON/SCI

Kevin Zadina, left, purchased the Seward Independent Group from Mark Rhoades of Enterprise Publishing in Blair. The group includes the Seward County Independent, Milford Times, Crete News, Wilber Republican and Friend Sentinel.

Paper starts year with new owner

The Seward County Independent and Milford Times take time each year to look back over the previous 12 months and remind our readers of changes and improvements that have taken place. As we continue to navigate the pandemic, it's good to see the steps forward that have been taken in our communities. From new names to new construction, the Seward County area saw a variety of changes during 2022. Even we had a change, when Kevin Zadina bought our group of papers from Enterprise Publishing in Blair.

As we look back in this section, we're also looking forward to the steps we take in 2022.

School moves into new building



COURTESY PHOTO

Our Redeemer Lutheran School in Staplehurst moved into its new ministry center in October. The new building is across the street north of the old school.

Business anniversaries

150 years – Seward County Ag Society

100 years – Hughes Brothers

80 years – Southeast Community College, Milford campus

70 years – Title Services of Blue Valley

50 years – Hydraulic Equipment Service Inc.; Stop 'N Shop, Milford

45 years – H&S Plumbing, Heating and Air; Seward Animal Hospital; Sparetime Lounge and Grill

35 years – Edward Jones Investments; R.W. Beckler and Associates; Walmart Supercenter; Pizza Kitchen

30 years – Woods Brothers Realty; Helmink Printing and Graphic Design; RG Investments

25 years – Southeast Nebraska CASA; Lenz Con-

struction; Rembold Ludtke, LLP; Milford Frame Clinic and Autos/Alimo Storage and Rentals; Milford Family Medical Center

20 years – Seward County Pheasants Forever; St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School; Milford Pharmacy; Seward County Habitat for Humanity
15 years – Casey's General Store, Davisson Furniture Center (south location), Hope Crisis Center, Lindy Studios

10 years – Chez Bubba Cafe; The Udder Store; Abbott Portable Toilets; JD's Coffee Shop

5 years – The Alps Dog Retreat; Seward Storage; Twin Rivers Urgent Care; Seward ACE Hardware; Enhanced Physical Therapy

Museum celebrates 100 years of Hughes Bros.

by Emily Hemphill
Seward County Independent

Having been in business for 100 years, the folks at Hughes Brothers have learned a thing or two about history: how to make it, how to avoid repeating it and how to preserve it.

John Hughes, current president of the Seward-based utility supply manufacturing company, said the last three generations of Hughes descendants have accumulated snippets of history, and those 100 years' worth of artifacts needed a home.

"We have this awesome story to tell. Why don't we just make a museum?" Hughes thought.

The company unveiled the new museum during an October open house commemorating its 100th anniversary, but the concept was several years in the making.

In 2017, Hughes Brothers sold its fiberglass pultrusion division to Owens Corning, and the sale sent four employees to the new company to oversee the transition.

That left four empty rooms inside the company's office



Al Tejral shares some of the significant events in the 100 years of Hughes Brothers' existence. The photo memorabilia is part of the company's new museum housed inside its office building.

building. Not wanting that space to become a dumping ground for old copiers and

broken junk, Hughes and his team decided it would be a great place to display those artifacts and tell the story of the Hughes family.

Brothers John, Harley, Ben and Ted started the company on a whim, after an ice storm in October 1921 took out the city's power system. They used the materials they had on hand for their house-building business to instead build cross arms for electrical poles to restore the power lines.

The museum features the 100-year history of the company through photographs, a family tree, displays of the production process and miniature replicas of Hughes Brothers' most popular products.

It also highlights the company's philanthropic contri-

butions over the years and its involvement in World War II, making ammunition boxes and other military supplies.

The museum is open to the public, but Hughes said it also serves a purpose for staff.

"When new employees come, they can see that this is not just a place where we're expecting them to work for five weeks, quit and move on," Hughes said. "It's a special place. The work is enjoyable, it's variable and you're not going to do the same thing all the time. There's a fair chance if you want to move up or try something different, you can do that. We decided it would be a fun place to tell the whole story of why we do what we do."

Hughes connected with Doug Hartman of Hartman

Historical Services in Omaha – the same person who contributed a large effort to the Nebraska National Guard Museum just up the hill from Hughes Brothers.

Hartman has worked on historical exhibits since 1988. He holds a master's degree in military history and began as a researcher, finding photographs and writing text for military exhibits as a historian for the Nebraska National Guard.

He started his own company in 1996 and expanded from being a research consultant to designing exhibits.

His portfolio includes military exhibits all over the United States and a couple of exhibits in St. Lo, France, a city liberated by the Nebraska National Guard during World War II.

He also has worked on exhibits for the Nebraska Jewish Historical Society in Omaha, the Nebraska Firefighters Museum in Kearney, the Johnny Carson Gallery at the Elkhorn Valley Museum in Norfolk and many others across the country.

Hartman said the best part of working with the Hughes Brothers team was learning about the company's involvement in World War II and designing an exhibit about its contributions to the war effort.

In 1942, the U.S. War Department commissioned Hughes Brothers to make more than a million ammunition boxes, anti-tank mine casings and triggers. The factory also made 120-foot wood trusses used to house B29 Superfortress bombers.

According to research now displayed in the museum, 64 Hughes Brothers employees served in World War II, including one who didn't make it home, Edward Rohren.

(continued on page 5)



EMILY HEMPHILL/SCI

An anti-tank mine casing and trigger, made by Hughes Brothers during World War II, are now on display in the museum.



EMILY HEMPHILL/SCI

Engineer Larry Vandergriend leads a tour through the new Hughes Brothers museum.

Hughes Bros.

(continued from page 4)

A large flag hangs in the war room of the museum, honoring those local service men and women.

“I love that flag. It is gorgeous, and I think we did a good job hanging it and helping to protect it,” Hartman said. “Preserving the item is as important as displaying the item.”

Hartman began talking about the project with the Hughes Brothers team last summer, but they didn’t get into the design process until January. They worked together to decide their vision for the space – everything from layout to lighting to the color of the ceiling.

“Hughes Brothers was a great client to work with because they wanted everything done right,” Hartman said.

Hughes Brothers produced a number of the larger custom displays for the museum in-house.

Hartman helped them determine which artifacts to include and how to display them in the most appropriate way.

“If you’re going to put out an object or a picture, it should help in telling the story,” Hartman said. “You should tell people why it’s there and highlight that object.”

Hughes said Hartman took the vision and amplified it.

“He really took the museum from something that would have looked fine to the next level of professionalism,” Hughes said.

Several Hughes Brothers employees also took part in the making of the museum, from Secretary/Treasurer Patty Roth researching history to Vice President of Engineering Larry Vandergriend designing and building some of the displays, Hughes said.

He hopes the community will visit the museum and learn more about what the company has produced the past 100 years, as well as its legacy in Seward.

The museum is open to the public from 12:30 to 3 p.m. the first Friday of every month. Larger groups may call (402) 641-2991 for an appointment.

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MEAGHAN STOUT/SCI

Construction on the music building at Concordia University continues.

Construction continues on CU music center

by Stephanie Croston
scroston@sewardindependent.com

Construction is continuing on the new music center at Concordia University.

“We are still on track for the building to open by Fall 2022,” Dave Kumm, executive vice president, CFO/COO, said in November. “With construction challenges in the U.S. and internationally, there have been some product and labor limitations and costs are changing on a regular basis.

“Thankfully with our partners at Sinclair Hille, HDR and Hampton Construction, we have been able to work around the hurdles and make adjustments to finish the project on time and within budget. As of the week of Nov. 22, the foundation walls are in place and the waterproof membrane (MEL ROL) to keep it dry is being installed.”

The project is estimated at \$17 million. The recital hall will stay in its current location, but the offices and rehearsal spaces were demolished in the spring.

The new music center will be 46,544 square feet, up from the current 40,000 square feet. Ceilings in the band and choir rehearsal spaces will be seven feet higher than in the

original building.

The project started with staff trying to figure out how to update the elevators in the rehearsal and office areas, Sommerfeld said.

“The elevator was necessary from the beginning,” Dr. Kurt von Kampen, chair of the music department at Concordia, said. “There’s always equipment being moved. Thankfully we’ve had no major problems.”

Von Kampen said the new basement will include a new theater with higher ceilings and new lighting and sound systems.

The western box with its 10 pipe organs and offices will be remodeled. A recording studio will also be added.

The east section of the building will be raised to the level of the west side, von Kampen said. The building will then have three levels instead of six.

“When it was built in the 1960s, they were interested in multi-level facilities,” von Kampen said.

The band and choir rooms are too small for the group sizes today. High school students who come for campus visits see facilities less than what they’re used to, von Kampen said.

The new walls in the building will help contain sound in the rehearsal spaces. Directors will be able to

adjust acoustics, as well.

The office suite will be on the main floor, along with Steinway piano studios, von Kampen said.

With the recording studio, directors will be able to record rehearsals to use a teaching tool, he said. Students will also be able to record their own music, and small groups can record in the studio, as well.

The updated facility will allow Concordia to offer a minor in recording and expand its emphases in music, von Kampen said.

While the Music Center is under construction, the music department has scattered. Jesse Hall is currently “music central,” von Kampen said, adding that a lot of pianos are there. Classes and offices are also in the Link Library, with practice studios in Esther Dormitory. Thom Leadership Education Center’s auditorium is also being used as a music space with eight or nine pianos in storage there, and the Dunklau Center is being used for storage.

The viewing room at Walz is a rehearsal space, as are St. John Lutheran Church and the auditorium in Weller Hall. Weller is the main rehearsal venue for the A Capella Choir and the concert band, von Kampen said.

Organ performance majors have

used the organs in Weller Hall and St. John and Faith Lutheran churches, and other area churches have opened for practices, as well. Three manual electric organs are in the basement of Weller for practice, von Kampen said.

Dr. Russell Sommerfeld, then-interim president of CU, said Concordia will endow a maintenance program for the Music Center like it did with Dunklau to help hold down tuition costs for students.

The faculty was involved in the planning and worked through three different ideas, von Kampen said. The first was to add an elevator, but the building still needed new heating, ventilation and air conditioning and handicapped accessible ramps. That meant a loss of space, he said.

The second idea was more grandiose, while the third was the one the university settled on. Sinclair Hille is the project architect and consulted with HDR, the firm that designed the Holland Center.

Concordia was notified in November that the project received an Architectural Merit Award in the Unbuilt category at the AIA Nebraska Excellence in Design Awards, Kumm said.

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School celebrates 20 years

by Keaton Burgess
Seward County Independent

After opening its doors in 2001, St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School is celebrating its 20-year anniversary.

In St. Vincent's first year, they had 36 students and included grades kindergarten through 3rd grade. This upcoming school year, St. Vincent will be adding 5th grade to their program to make their school preschool through 5th grade.

Father Robert Tucker talked more about the history of the school.

"Mrs. Lisa Crane and Mrs. Marilyn Bohaty are our two teachers that have been at the school all 20 years," Tucker said. "They have been great assets to our staff."

"It's also cool to think that people who went to this school when it first opened now have kids who are starting to attend the same school," Tucker said.

St. Vincent had a celebration on June 6 for reaching the 20-year mark.

"We had about 300 people at the celebration, it was a lot of fun," Tucker said. "We catered in pulled pork and had tents and games set up for the kids to play. We also had live polka music too. It really was a good time."

Although the school may be small, Tucker said that they are still doing very well academically.



St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School celebrated 20 years in 2021 after originally opening its doors in 2001.

"We had our highest testing scores this year, especially in math," Tucker said. "We even ranked nationally."

Anyone interested in enrolling at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic school can contact the school at

(402) 643-3421 and talk to secretary Janet Kuehl or Principal Denise Ray.

"We have a great school here," Tucker said. "Come take advantage of what we have to offer."

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Pheasants Forever celebrates over 20 years of work within Seward County

by Lena Nelson
UNL intern

The hills of Merlyn Nielsen's land, habitat for wildlife northwest of Seward, reach up to the horizon and are full of grasses and splotches of colored wildflowers. The wind rustles through the plant stems and wafts the smells of clover and milkweed.

Nielsen is the Habitat chairperson and treasurer of the Seward County Pheasants Forever chapter.

The Seward County Pheasants Forever chapter, including its 225 members, recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. The surrounding counties have their own chapters except for Butler County, which will occasionally join with the Seward County chapter.

Pheasants Forever works within the community in various ways, whether it be funding, planting habitat or educating youth about the outdoors and hunting.

The chapter invests about \$5,000 yearly into surrounding habitats and \$1,200 between local wildlife and civic organizations. When it comes to local, state and national habitat projects, the chapter contributes \$25,000.

"We provide a variety of opportunities for the youth of the surrounding areas to experience the outdoors in hopes that this exposure creates an appreciation in them and extends the longevity of the chapter," said Roy Josoff Jr., president of the chapter.

Pheasants Forever hosts youth hunts, contributes money to 4-H programs for awards and annually sponsors hunter education as outreach to younger members.

The Seward County Pheasants

ants Forever chapter also works closely with Concordia University.

"Our relationship with Concordia is a love, love relationship. We help them, and they help us," said Merlyn Nielsen, the treasurer and habitat chair of the chapter.

The chapter works with the university's shooting team and helps with fundraising as well as providing direct donations. This helps the team compete and practice by providing funds for traveling and material costs. In turn, students of the team often help with set up and during the annual banquet.

Creating and maintaining habitat for wildlife is also important to the chapter, according to Nielsen. The chapter has two drills that are rented out to help landowners with planting seeds. This is often done within conservation reserve programs but will occasionally be funded by the landowner personally. The chapter helped with two seedings in the spring on the individuals' own funding.

"Since we are within a farming community, we sometimes struggle to give money locally to help landowners. We try to be generous whether it is through the chapter or by helping with government programs," Josoff said.

Pheasants Forever often provides the equipment and funding as well as wildlife biologists with the chapter who organize seed plans. The chapter has been seeding and creating habitat for around 20 years now within Seward County.

"We are always looking for the opportunity to chat with people about habitat. We strive to invest in habitats and work to maintain them not only for pheasants, but a whole host of other wildlife," Nielsen said.



LENA NELSON/UNL INTERN/SCI

Merlyn Nielsen of Seward looks out over his CRP land outside of Seward. Nielsen, the Pheasants Forever Habitat chairperson and treasurer, talks about his process of tree removal, seeding five species of grasses in 1998 and around 2009 adding wildflower species.

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Mark joined the Suhr & Lichty Insurance team in 1984 after graduating from the University of Nebraska Kearney. He has since achieved numerous industry awards and professional insurance designations, including the industry's top designation Certified Insurance Counselor.



Thomas Suhr

Thomas joined the Suhr & Lichty Insurance team in 2019 after graduating from the University of Wyoming. Thomas graduated with a Bachelors Degree in Agriculture Ecology.



Shelley Scheele

Shelley joined the Suhr & Lichty Insurance team in 2004. Shelley is a graduate from Doane University in Crete, NE.



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Jodi brings over 20 years of experience to her role at Suhr & Lichty Insurance, where she has served clients since 1998.

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Diane joined the Suhr & Lichty Insurance team in 1988 after graduating from Nebraska Wesleyan University. She has since achieved numerous industry awards and professional insurance designations including the industry's top designation, Certified Insurance Counselor.



Tyler Lichty

Tyler joined the Suhr & Lichty Insurance team in 2014 after graduating from Nebraska Wesleyan University. Tyler is a graduate of Seward High School in 2010. He has since earned his property and casualty insurance license, crop insurance license and earned his designation as an Authorized Insurance Producer.



Liesel Pabian

Liesel became part of the team in 2019. She is quickly learning the ins and outs of property and casualty insurance.



Kerry Stalsberg

Kerry joined the Suhr & Lichty team in March of 2021 and received her property & casualty license in May. She is eager to grow with the team and brings lots of energy and hometown roots.



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Remembering Rondorf, contributions to Habitat

by Lena Nelson
UNL Intern

The Seward County Habitat for Humanity chapter built houses for over 20 years in the community. The late Don Rondorf is one individual many in Seward County have to thank for that.

“Don’s positive outlook and love of people is what made Seward County Habitat for Humanity so successful,” said Shelly Nitz, a member of Habitat for Humanity.

Habitat for Humanity often reached out to churches within Seward in search of volunteers. Rondorf, who died Dec. 13, 2020, first got involved with Habitat for Humanity by volunteering for a project. He ended up staying on with the organization for about 17 years.

The Seward County Habitat for Humanity built its first house in 1996 within the city limits of Seward. Hab-

itat builds homes for people in need of housing as well as helping with roofing and siding.

Habitat for Humanity helps individuals with 50% median income and lower. Over time, it became harder to find qualifying individuals within the county. Because of this, Seward County Habitat for Humanity began Brush with Kindness.

Brush with Kindness helped with smaller issues lower income families faced including providing ramps, doing lawn work, building storage sheds or painting buildings. According to Nitz, Rondorf headed up almost everything within the organization.

“Don saw which people needed safe, affordable housing and reached out to let them know that Habitat was there to help them.” said Pam Rondorf, Don Rondorf’s wife.

(continued on page 20)



LENA NELSON/UNL INTERN/SCI

Pam Rondorf, left, and Shelly Nitz stand among records of Habitat for Humanity houses in Seward.

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A place to be creative, bold and joyful

Alexa Axthelm opens the William Henry School of the Arts in Seward amid pandemic in March of 2020

by Samantha Hargens
UNL Intern

William Henry School of the Arts is proving to be successful despite opening during a pandemic.

“I had a moment of ‘oh no, what have I done?’” Alexa Axthelm, owner of William Henry School of the Arts, said.

Axthelm has been dancing from age 2 until she graduated high school. She was raised in Clinton, North Carolina, but her dad is from Nebraska. After high school in 2014, she started college in North Carolina, but her parents moved to Nebraska and she transferred to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, graduating with a degree in theatre design with an emphasis in scenic painting in 2018.

After graduation, she moved to Indiana and then Florida working as a scenic painter before moving to Seward to be closer to family. She started working for Suzanne Gligorevic, previous owner of InMOTION Fitness, and then took over the studio and turned it into William Henry School of the Arts.

The William Henry School of the Arts is a studio in Seward that accommodates all individuals with helping them explore their artistic abilities. The studio offers dance, art and fitness classes to all who participate.

Axthelm said when she signed the paperwork in Feb-



SAMANTHA HARGENS/UNL INTERN/SCI

Alexa Axthelm opened William Henry School of the Arts in March of 2020 at the start of the pandemic.

ruary 2020 and took over the building, previously called inMOTION Fitness, she had a moment of panic. She had summer classes planned to announce and thought the pandemic would jeopardize her business.

“I knew how many students we needed for this to work, and God provided,” Axthelm said.

Axthelm talked about the pandemic precautions she and other teachers took with students because of the pandemic. The school had “magic dance boxes,” squares of tape on the floor, for students

to social distance between one another.

“We made it work, and the kids were just happy to get out and do something,” Axthelm said.

Axthelm said Seward makes it clear there is a need for the community to have a place where people can have a creative outlet.

“Seward is a really great community, but I felt we just don’t have enough arts,” Axthelm said.

Axthelm said having a creative outlet is important for everyone, especially children.

According to an article written from the Brookings Institution, kids who do art are 75% more likely to be successful at whatever else they do.

Axthelm said forms of art help people develop problem-solving skills, pushing self limits by going outside one’s comfort zone, being creative, which translates into other areas. William Henry School of the Arts offers a range of creative classes such as dance, fitness, and art. The online signup for classes fill up quickly.

Seward High School

alumna Ella Davis-Schmidt worked for the previous owner of InMOTION Fitness and stayed on when Axthelm took over and is now a lead teacher teaching jazz and ballet.

“This is a great opportunity to be able to show their emotions without having to put them into words which is sometimes difficult for kids,” Davis-Schmidt said.

Davis-Schmidt said the school is a great place for children to be able to show their creativity on a daily and weekly basis. Davis-Schmidt hopes to see William Henry School of the Arts welcome more kids in the future and watch this business grow.

“I think Alexa is doing a great job. No one knew how to navigate during the pandemic, but she did everything she could to give kids the opportunity to be creative and perform,” Davis-Schmidt said.

William Henry School of the Arts is named after William Henry Seward, the Secretary of State who served under President Abraham Lincoln. Seward is known as Nebraska’s Fourth of July City and each class level is named after a firework.

Ages 3-5 are called Tiny Comets, ages 6-8 are the Sparklers, ages 9-12 are the Poppers, and ages 13-15 are the Rockets. The school colors are black, red and white to stand for creative, bold, and joyful as the theme for the school. Axthelm said the school nurtures creativity and artistic development while providing a warm and positive environment to foster the growth that all students want and need.

“If I can do it in the first year with COVID and all the rules, I can take anything,” Axthelm said.

Artists stick with original artwork

by Lena Nelson
UNL Intern

Two women with Seward connections are designing their original art and turning it into stickers. A few Seward businesses are selling these stickers in their shops.

One of the aspects people appreciate about Seward is the small town support for small businesses. Whether it be a coffee shop, a bookshop on the corner or the artistic endeavors of those within the community, Seward citizens recognize the support. Emmi Moll and Emma Brand are two local artists who have begun to sell their art in Seward.

“Everybody loves their stickers. It has been exciting to see it kind of snowball for them. Other people can see their art and it can sometimes lead to other opportunities for Emmi and Emma,” said Carla Ketner, owner of Chapters Books & Gifts.

Emma Brand, originally from Springfield, Missouri, and current Seward resident, graduated from Concordia University in November with degrees in elementary education and graphic design with the ultimate dream of writing and publishing children’s books.

Brand’s small sticker recreations of buildings within Seward began with the Founders Hall on the Concordia campus. Brand sketched and painted a picture of the hall on paper for a friend as a gift. Most of her drawings in the beginning were gifts for



LENA NELSON/UNL INTERN

Emmi Moll of Seward sits in front of Chapters Books & Gifts, one of the places where she sells the stickers she creates.

birthdays and Christmases. Then they began to expand from the Founders Hall to JD’s Coffee Shop, Chapters Book & Gifts, Red Path Gallery and Tasting Room and the Seward County Courthouse.

Brand said her process really begins with a picture of the building. Then she traces the outline of the architecture and begins to fill in the details with graphite and watercolor. Once the building looks how Brand remembers it, she takes the drawing back to the building for a final picture comparison of the two.

“It’s really cool to see the final product and the original photo next to each other. I enjoy adding in the photography. I just find it makes the whole process,” Brand said.

Local businesses purchase the stickers in bulk from Brand and sell them to customers.

“It really started

with a love for Concordia. I feel like I am this adopted person of Seward. It feels good to be comfortable in a place that wasn’t your original home,” Brand said.

Emmi Moll of Seward and a Concordia graduate also sells her stickers and art in places around Seward. Moll graduated in 2018 with a degree in graphic design.

Moll’s art can be found in the Chapters Books & Gifts and at the Seward Junior Women’s Club Holiday Craft show in November each year.

“Chapters makes it really easy. They just had me bring in five or 10 of my sticker designs to keep in the shop consistently,” Moll said.

Moll has also made calendars the past three years and sold her latest batch at Liberty House Bed and Breakfast this year.

To create the calen-

dars, Moll paints with mainly watercolors as she finds them easy to manipulate. She uses watercolor for most of her stickers as well,

although some are done digitally with Photoshop.

Brand continues to work in Seward as a School Age Coordina-

tor and is considering teaching positions in the fall. Although Brand doesn’t foresee the stickers bringing in (continued on page 19)

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Parks and rec tries to return to normal during pandemic

by Jennifer Yuma
UNL intern

Recreation departments have granted families the ability to play sports and be involved in activities in an organized way. Children toss footballs around, while their parents volunteering to coach their children's teams.

Since COVID, the community atmosphere of park and recreation were missed. Now that those programs are opening back up for youth sports, people are learning how to get involved in team-based activities again.

Adam Bode, assistant parks and recreation director for the city of Seward, said things are looking up from last year.

"Last year we took a huge hit in regards to registration just because we were in the thick of the pandemic," Bode said. "This year we've gotten pretty lucky having a lot of teams who want to participate and play tournaments normally again."

Marissa Parman, recreation coordinator for the city of Milford, said numbers are finally coming back up.

"We understood why, even when we were open, children and families were hesitant," Parman said. "Everyone was looking out for their safety."

Strict guidelines were put in place that limited sports.

"We completely shut down until June of 2020," Bode said. "It was different, because we didn't allow anyone outside the household into the complex, and we didn't get to do little league which is our baseball and softball league that we normally do, along with no traveling."

The same way baseball and softball leagues were affected in Seward, Milford Parks and Rec sports were affected as well.

"Last year we didn't even have a fall session of soccer, so that was impacted," Parman said.

For both rec departments, softball and baseball returned this summer.

"The spring softball picked up and the baseball has a lot of kids again after a year of uncertainty," Parman said.

Seward Parks and Rec received a major hit in participation as a whole in 2020.

"Last year, we were down 20 to 30



JENNIFER YUMA/UNL INTERN

Children play soccer for the city rec program for pre-K through second grade, run through Seward Parks and Recreation.

percent in participation numbers," Bode said. "This year we are pretty normal again and back to where we were pre-pandemic."

Bode said that if possible, many sports and activities are staying outside.

"Everyone's excited to get out there and play," Bode said. "Espe-

cially baseball because it's out in the open with plenty of space and openness in the park."

Both Seward and Milford recreation departments rely heavily on adult volunteers.

"Volunteer coaches are always a tricky thing," Bode said. "Every-

(continued on page 20)



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July 4 celebration in person again in 2021

by Clark Kolterman
Seward County Independent

It was over 60 years ago, in 1969, when the community of Seward, Nebraska decided to put its “claim to fame” on its annual Fourth of July Celebration and it became a positive identity for the City of Seward.

At that time, many communities were attempting to hang their hat on some type of identity, and Seward was right there with them.

For example, Wilber became the Nebraska Czech Capitol, Ogallala was crowned the Cowboy Capitol, Lincoln became the STAR CITY and Stromsburg was named the Swedish Capital of Nebraska.

“The question was proposed by the community: What should Seward identify with? What could Seward

be a capitol of to create an identity?” said July Fourth Committee leader Clark Kolterman.

After considering numerous options, such as German Capitol or Education Capitol or even Ag Capitol, it was decided –based on the then 100 plus years of Fourth of July Celebrations -to work towards the goal of becoming “Nebraska’s Fourth of July Capitol.”

This title eventually evolved into Nebraska’s Fourth of July City, thus promoting our area’s deep sense of patriotism and surrounding our community in the official city colors of red, white and blue.

“In the beginning, it was self-proclaimed, and in 1977, it first became official with a special proclamation by then Governor J. J. Exon. He named Seward ‘Nebraska’s



Official Fourth of July City,’ based on the very successful, annual, family oriented, fun-filled Fourth of July Celebration each year,” Kolterman said.

But that claim to fame was

almost halted in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when, the Seward Fourth of July Celebration Committee canceled the live in-person Fourth of July Celebration and opted for a virtual

Fourth.

“While the virtual event was a success as virtual events go, it was not a live Fourth of July Celebration, and that celebration was missed both by the families and supporter of the Fourth and economically by the area businesses,” Kolterman said.

“The Fourth of July Celebration in Seward is now a very important part of the pride of Seward. Even the Seward water towers and arm badges on the uniforms of the Seward Police promote us as the Fourth of July City. It is our claim to fame each year and we are proud to host the state in a grand event,” Pat Coldiron, local business person and committee member, said.

“But it is also a major, driving force for many of us economically, as we bene-
(continued on page 22)

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Seward County Agricultural Society celebrates 150 years

by Keaton Burgess
Seward County Independent

The Seward County Agricultural Society hit 150 years of being open last year, but was not able to celebrate due to COVID.

Since the society was formed in 1871, it has been helping out and putting on many events including the Seward County Fair and helping with FFA, 4-H and the agriculture around Seward and surrounding areas.

The Ag Society also hosts many different public events in the Ag Pavilion.

“Recently, we hosted Memorial Health Care Systems to give COVID vaccines,” Doug Brand said. Brand is a long time member of the Seward County Ag Society. “We were glad to be able to host Memorial Health Care without charging anything to them.”

Brand spoke on the history of the Ag Society.

“Our society started back in 1871. That same year is when we hosted the first county fair,” Brand said. “Since then, a lot has happened in the past for our Ag Society and fairgrounds. We’ve moved and rebuilt the fairgrounds. We’ve also added on new buildings to the fairgrounds like the Ag Pavilion in 1990.”

With all of these things happening, Brand had to mention all of the dedication it took.

“We wouldn’t be where we are today without all of the individuals that put in a lot of time and dedication to this society,” Brand said. “We’ve had a lot of strong people on the Ag Society board that have helped for many years and we are thankful for that. Some of our board members are coming up on 45 years of



This treasure chest cake earned a purple and champion middle cake decorating exhibit award for Morgan Havlat.

service. We are also thankful for the County Commissioners and the work that they have put in for us. You also

have to bring up Jack Aegert and Ron Gade. When you talk about the Seward County fair, you can’t go without

mentioning Jack and Ron. They put in a lot of time and effort for our fair.”

Although the Ag Society has a rich history, there is one item that reminds people of the history better than anything, the Seward County Fair Quilt.

“The quilt was made at the Seward County Quilt Guild and was made by some of the ladies who worked closely with the fair,” Brand said. “Each patch on the quilt represents a part of the fair and it represents the history of our fair very well.”

Although the Ag Society didn’t have any events to celebrate its 150-year anniversary, Brand wanted to remind everyone of one important event for the society.

“The Seward County Fair is coming up on Aug. 5-8,” Brand said. “It’s always a lot of fun and it’s great for all ages.”



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Weapons, warriors exhibits join museum

by Gerald D. "Jerry" Meyer
NENG Historian

The year 2021 saw several new additions to the Nebraska National Guard Museum in Seward as well as increasing attendance during the pandemic.

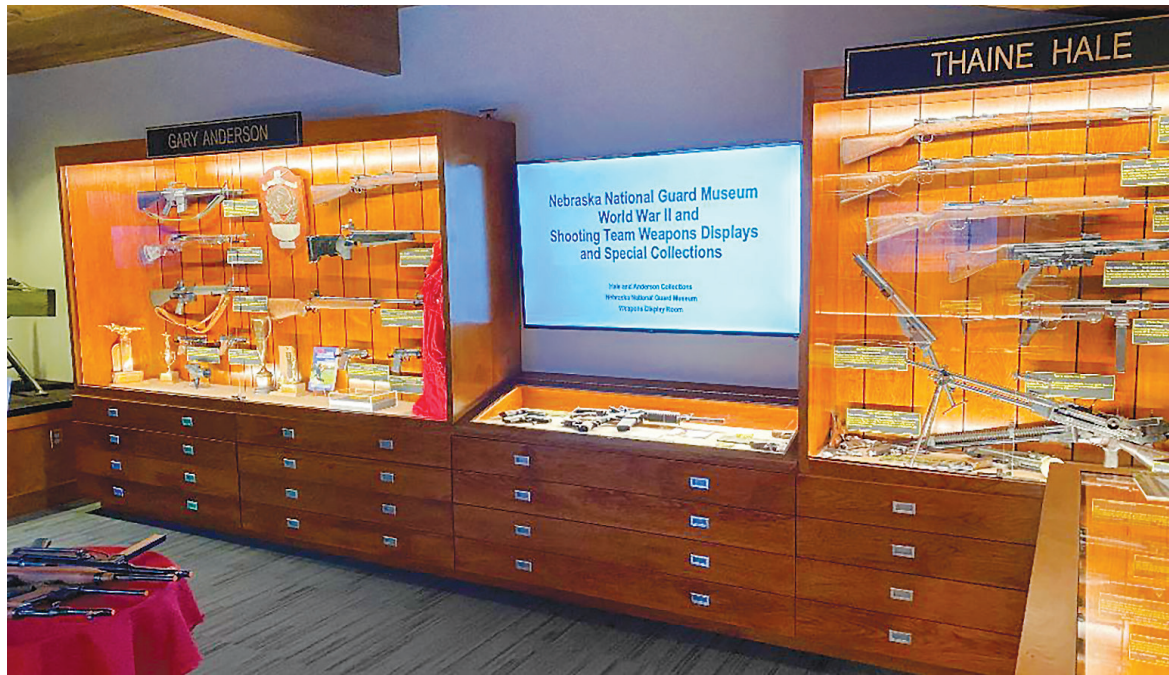
The coming year will see more additions to the facility as the main floor space starts to fill in. Despite COVID-19, the numbers of visitors to the museum has steadily increased during the year. In part, due to the large numbers of student groups who couldn't visit in person during 2020, the museum is getting back on track to its goal of 30,000 visitors a year.

The largest, and most expensive, addition to the museum was the John and Darlene Wood Weapons Display room. Completed in June, and unveiled and dedicated on July 4, 2021, this room is considered one of the best in the National Guard museum system.

With a generous financial contribution from Darlene Wood in memory of her husband, John, the room features custom made cabinets, exhibits, audio-visual monitors and an extensive number of vintage firearms related to the Nebraska National Guard. John served in the Nebraska National Guard in the 1950's, and the room features some of his artifacts on display. Each of the cabinets is named for a person or group of historic significance to the Nebraska National Guard:

- Frances Lohnes – only Nebraskan to receive a Medal of Honor for actions within the boundary of the state. This collection features weapons from the founding of the NENG in 1854 to the late 1880's.

- William Grayson – fired the first shot of the Philippine Insurrection. This collection features weapons



COURTESY PHOTO

A new addition at the Nebraska National Guard Museum is the John and Darlene Wood Weapons Display Room. Dedicated on July 4, 2021, it is dedicated to the late John Wood who was a member of the Nebraska National Guard in the 1950's. The collection features firearms from the founding of the NENG in 1854 to present. Custom cabinets named for historic figures house the extensive collection.

from the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II and Desert Storm.

- Second Platoon, Company M – this unit held the road open for Patton to relieve the 101st Airborne at Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge (World War II) and they all received Bronze Stars for their actions. This collection features machine guns and other crew served weapons from World War I and II.

- Thaine Hale – soldier in the 134th Infantry Regiment during World War II in France, was surrounded by the Germans and rather than surrender, fought through the lines, got a tank and fought his way back to rescue his fellow soldiers. He was killed shortly after and was awarded the Silver Star (posthumous). This collection features many of the World War II weapons (Allied and Axis) that have been donated to the museum.

- Gary Anderson – soldier in the Nebraska National Guard and two-time Olympic

gold medalist in shooting (Tokyo 1964, Mexico City 1968). This collection features weapons from our shooting teams and will also feature the 1964 rifle used by Anderson in Tokyo (currently being restored).

Below the glass cases in each of the display areas are special collections that have been donated over the years:

- Bayonets and Sabers collection (1800's to present)

- Collection of Capt. Carl J. Norden, Jr. (World War II weapons)

- Collection of Maurice Donaho (Mauser and other World War II weapons/artifacts)

- Collection of Jack Swanson (Vintage military weapons)

Some special weapons are also featured in the collection:

- Colt M1911A1 Pistol of Major John Cattle – features "sweetheart grips" with pictures of his wife, Virginia, and son, Jay.

- Browning M1917 Ma-

chine Gun (water cooled) – featuring stories of heroism from George "Rambo" Hansen and Ralph Greeley during World War II.

- Browning M2 Heavy Barrel (HB) Heavy Machine Gun – featuring stories of the 1074th Transportation Company and the all-female gun crew in Iraq.

- Colt AR-15 Heavy Assault Rifle – one of 200 produced. It is a Model GX-5856 and was tested as a "three in one weapon" and failed in the 1960's.

- Service Pistols since World War I features the M1911 (.45 ACP), the Beretta M9 (9mm), and the current pistols Sig Sauer M17 and M18. One of the M9 is an Adjutant General's pistol (rare for a collection).

New to the room is 2022 will be a cabinet in the middle of the room to house new weapons to the collection: (future acquisitions) M107 Barrett 50 caliber sniper rifle, M2010 Sniper Rifle (.30 caliber), M110 Sniper Rifle

(.308 Win), M60 Machine Gun (replica), M240B Machine Gun (replica) and M249 Machine Gun (replica).

Also new to 2022 will be lighting for the pull out drawers and additional labeling of the collection in the drawers.

Women warriors

The Nebraska Women Warriors Exhibit was dedicated on July 4, 2021. It was created by select female veterans and current serving members to honor their service since 1972.

The main floor exhibit features select artifacts housed in a display case, and audio-visual monitor with interviews, and story boards and additional artifacts in small cases. One of the famous pictures featured shows Gov. J.J. Exon swearing in the first Nebraska Army National Guard recruits Leslie Doughy, Christine Sherman Thompson and Jodell "Jodie" Urbauer in January, 1972.

The story behind the picture is that only a commissioned officer can swear in new recruits, and the scene was done over a few minutes after the famous picture was taken.

Some of the wall displays feature recruiting handouts from the early days directed at female recruits. Several prominent female soldiers and airmen are featured in the exhibit to include Gen. Roma Amundsen (her general's officer belt), Capt. Lorrie Hayward (storyboard - first female pilot in the Nebraska Air National Guard), Gen. Wendy Johnson (dress uniform jacket), Chief Warrant Officer Teresa Domeier (uniform – highest ranking female Warrant Officer in the entire National Guard), and Deb Tiemann Tankesley (early "test" uniform).

At the July 4 dedication, many of the veterans and current female soldiers and airmen were present to unveil the new exhibit.

New name, same game at Middle Creek Printing

by Stephanie Croston
scroston@sewardindependent.com

It started with hats.

In the mid 1990s, Joey Carder and his sister were looking for a way to make some money, and their dad Ron suggested selling hats outside Memorial Stadium.

They did, and Joey has been selling hats (and other items) ever since.

At the time, the Carders contracted with an embroidery company in Lincoln to add designs to their hats. Eventually, they bought an embroidery machine and started doing their own work.

One of their most popular designs was Nebraska Bugeaters, Joey said.

In 1998, the Carders set up a shop in Milford where Pizza Kitchen is now. They moved to the location where Dragonfly is and outgrew that in 2001. They were doing screen printing in Ron's basement in Pleasant Dale and moved the business, then known as Sports Express, to his garage in 2002.

It kept expanding, eventually

taking over the garage, sunroom and basement, Joey said. In 2012, the Carders worked with the city of Seward and Cattle Bank to buy a lot at the corner of Fifth and Bradford using LB840 funds.

At the time, the Sports Express staff was three – Joey, Ron and Ron's wife. Today, the business employs six people and is looking for a seventh, Joey said.

The name Sports Express came about because the business also sold surplus sporting goods and equipment. In February 2021, Ron retired and Joey took over.

Joey, a 2001 graduate of Milford High, said running the business was not what he'd planned. He worked with EarthLink for a little while, but came back to Sports Express in 2003.

When his dad retired, he started considering a new name.

"I love sports and working with businesses and other organizations," he said. "We don't just do sports. The name is more reflective of what we do."

He wanted something that tied

back to his dad and the early days of Sports Express in Pleasant Dale. Middle Creek runs through town, and it seemed a natural fit.

Middle Creek Printing offers a variety of services, from embroidery to screen printing to sublimation, which is a print that dyes the shirt and can be done while you wait. MCP can also design and print awards, mugs and other items.

"I love working with a customer start to finish," he said.

Joey said online stores have become more popular, especially for sports teams, and MCP is adding more for businesses.

"They're set up so everyone can order. Then we compile, print and sort," he said.

The pandemic has hurt the supply

chain at MCP, he said. There have been items MCP can't get in a specific color or style.

The MCP staff is working to develop a dashboard for businesses to use and to find ways to make the ordering process better.

"We're busy all the time," he said with a smile.

Inventory changes throughout the year, he said. In the spring, for example, MCP does more with business apparel and items for reunions. In the mid- to late fall, the choice changes to heavier weight clothing.

"Every piece is a custom piece," he said. "We design, set up and print. It's kind of cool. It's more than picking a shirt off a shelf."

MCP used to be at a lot of weekend tournaments to sell custom shirts to fans and players. They have dialed that back to a Memorial Day tournament in Omaha and a couple tournaments in Seward.

Middle Creek Printing still does hats, although they're not Joey's favorite item, he said, grinning.



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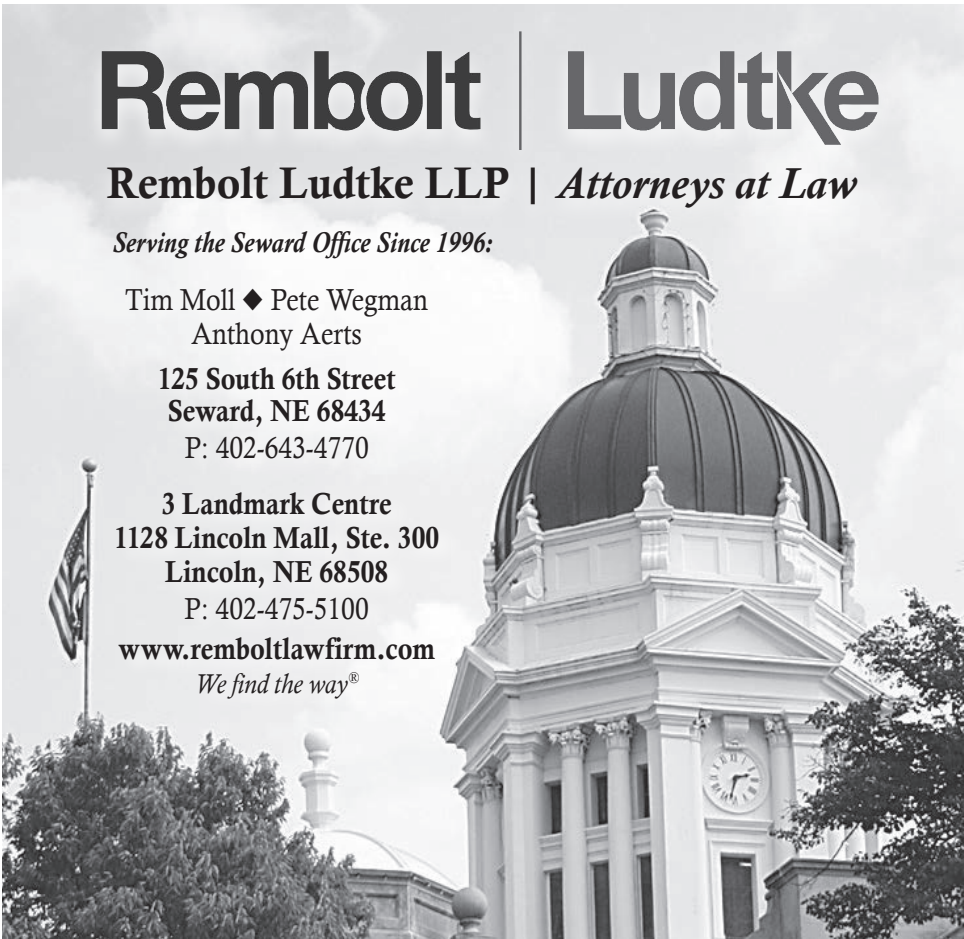
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Southeast Nebraska CASA celebrates 25 years

by Keaton Burgess
reporter@sewardindependent.com

Since starting in 1996 in Seward, the Southeast Nebraska Court Appointed Special Advocates has been open for 25 years.

Since then, Southeast Nebraska CASA has expanded to many surrounding areas. Its first expansion was to Jefferson County in 2011.

Southeast Nebraska CASA's other expansions included Saline County in 2014 and Gage and Thayer Counties in 2015.

Marci Fehlhafer, Executive Director of Southeast Nebraska CASA, talked about the responsibilities of a volunteer.

"Our volunteers advocate on behalf of abused and neglected children," Fehlhafer said. "They are assigned to a case, and then the volunteer looks at everything and recommends to a judge what they think is best for the child."

To become a volunteer, Fehlhafer said there is training.

"They have to go through 30 hours of training and an extensive

background check," Fehlhafer said. "Once they finish that, then they are sworn in."

To celebrate their 25th anniversary, Southeast Nebraska CASA hopes to tie it in with a yearly event they hold.

"We hope to do something for it at the Scare at the Fair event," Fehlhafer said. "We host this at the Ag Pavilion on Halloween, so we hope to tie in our anniversary to it somehow."

When it comes to Southeast Nebraska CASA's success, Fehlhafer

would like to thank Seward County.

"Seward County has been a tremendous support to us, and we are very thankful for them," Fehlhafer said. "You see some businesses struggle sometimes due to lack of county support, but not for us."

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer for Southeast Nebraska CASA can contact their offices at (402) 643-3695 or visit their new and updated website for more information.

Stickers

(continued from page 13)

big bucks, she plans on continuing drawing the buildings around town.

Brand is also working on puzzle designs with other local artists that will be on the shelves in Chapters Books & Gifts near November.

Moll works at Middle Creek Printing doing the shipping and receiving. She plans to continue to sell her stickers in Chapters Books & Gifts, as well

as on her Etsy shop. Moll also plans to continue to attend craft fairs with her art.

Both Moll and Brand also sell their art through their own online shops which offer an array of products.

Emmi Moll's products can be found at her shop emmilinellustration on Etsy. Emma Brand's works can be found at happymediumillustration.weebly.com.



COURTESY IMAGE

Emma Brand created this drawing of the Seward County Courthouse that is available as a sticker.

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Habitat

(continued from page 11)

When asked about Rondorf's life and involvement with Habitat for Humanity, Nitz and Pam Rondorf provided stories of all that Rondorf did. One year, a house needed new paint. Volunteers were needed to help scrape and repaint the siding. Rondorf contacted the Concordia University football team to help with the project. Within several days, a large group of Bulldog football players were helping scrape the house.

"Anytime there was a project that needed help, he would get up in church and ask for volunteers. He was always thinking about Habitat. Don couldn't drive by an empty lot in Seward County without wondering if it was available for someone in need," Pam Rondorf said.

Habitat for Humanity has built close to 20 homes in the Seward County area over the years. Rondorf played a big part in all that the organization did. Between his ability to gather volunteers, to find people in need and his positive outlook, Rondorf was the go-to man for Habitat for Humanity. When he believed in something, he gave it his all.

"When we were looking for new leaders for Seward County Habitat for Humanity, everybody said, 'I am not Don Rondorf,'" Nitz said.

Since Seward County Habitat for Humanity was looking for leadership, they contacted Lincoln Habitat for Humanity to acquire its

chapter. Seward County Habitat began to combine with Lincoln's Habitat for Humanity in the beginning of 2019.

Josh Hanshaw of the Lincoln Habitat for Humanity worked closely with Rondorf when the two organizations were working together.

"Don was a huge advocate for Habitat and incredibly supportive. He is dearly missed," Hanshaw said.

One former Habitat member said: "We are grateful to have known and loved Don. Never will we forget his positive outlook and his love of people. It was always a blessing to be in his presence, whether fundraising, building, cooking burgers or a habitat meeting, we always had the feeling that if Don were there everything would be alright. It is hard to express how much Don will be missed. He touched so many lives in such a positive way."



Don Rondorf

Parks and Rec

(continued from page 14)

body's busy so we rely on the volunteer coaches and that was just as hard pre-pandemic."

Most volunteers in Milford have family involvement in the team sports as well.

"We have all volunteers and most of them have kids on the teams," Parman said.

Bode said the Seward Recreation Department is operating with precaution.

"We still continue to give the kids GERM X, Kleenex, hand sanitizers, etc.," Bode said. "We also consult with Four Corners Health Department and the hospital here in Seward."

Parman said that Milford is being as safe as possible.

"We still took precautions, but for the most part, everyone was ready to come back and that was toward the end of March this year," Parman said.

Parman said the overall goal for Milford's recreation department is to get children playing again.

"We want to get kids involved and get the word out for families," Parman said. "Kids want to be active and we want to give them those opportunities."

UNL helps with content

An advanced reporting class from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln was in Seward last summer, helping at the Seward County Independent. Assignments included articles that appear in this special edition.

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Seward considers building wellness center

by Stephanie Croston
scroston@sewardindependent.com

A convenient location, city approval and ballot measure are steps the Seward Wellness Center committee is using to bring a wellness center to Seward.

The wellness center, as currently planned, would include a six-lane swimming pool, two basketball/all purpose courts, a walking track, exercise and cardio room, a children's area, a multi-use space and locker rooms. It would be available for after-school programs and youth activities, as well.

The proposed center would be north of Seward Middle School, giving students easy access to it. That would be similar to the former Seward Youth Center (now the brewing facility for Bottle Rocket Brewery), located across from the former middle school (now The Rock Church).

The city provided a letter of intent



at its Oct. 19 meeting, stating that the city would put a sales tax increase question on the primary election ballot in May. The sales tax would be used to pay for about one-third of the project.

The committee applied for a \$5 million State of Nebraska Shovel Ready Capital Recovery and Investment Grant, and that requires a match of up to \$5 million. Committee members were soliciting pledges

through Dec. 31.

Pledges may be paid over five years. If the wellness center does not happen, the pledges will be void.

According to www.sewardwellnesscenter.org, the project is currently estimated between \$12 and \$15 million. Costs would be divided into thirds between donations, grants and public funding.

If a sales tax increase is approved in May, the soonest construction could begin is in the fall of 2022, the website said.

Seward Youth Center

The former Seward Youth Center building has been repurposed by Bottle Rocket Brewing Co. The building was sold in November 2018, Erika Kratochvil, SYC board treasurer, said.

Attendance had dropped at the center when the middle school moved to its new location at Waverly Road and Karol Kay Boulevard. Before, the SYC was across the street from

the middle school, so it was easy for students to get there.

Originally, the youth center board wanted to build their own building, but now they are teaming with the Seward Wellness Center committee, Kratochvil said.

Former board members Bill Sloup and Kurt Baumbach support the combination.

"When it first started, it said in the bylaws if the youth center doesn't exist, the money should be given to something to support youth," Sloup said.

Money to create the youth center came from a Peter Kiewitt donation and the sale of engraved bricks on the east side of the building.

The \$255,000 from the sale of the building will go toward a new wellness center, Kratochvil said. With the inclusion of youth center activities at a new facility, programs could be expanded and that would be good for students, she said.

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Homestead Act instrumental in church founding

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church celebrates 150 plus 1

by Elizabeth A. Elliott
news@enterprisepub.com

For just over 150 years, Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Middle Creek has stood as a sentinel of faith, dating back to its German immigrant founders.

“The church was founded in 1870 and the part I find interesting is the Homestead Act started in 1862 and that was instrumental in this, even though it’s a side story,” said church secretary Verda Schweitzer, whose grandfather was one of the founders of the church. “That’s what brought people to this area, the German immigrants who were Lutheran. They came and homesteaded here and felt a need for a church.

She said before the church, there was a strong need for a cemetery.

They were losing children because of all the health issues at that time. She said one particular event was a driving factor — two young boys

died when they were struck by lightning in their home.

“One was 17 and the other was 11. One of the homesteaders were meeting in homes for services and one offered up land to have the boys buried in and that’s where our church cemetery is,” Schweitzer said. “They were the first two buried. Then they received the land for the church.”

To celebrate the church anniversary of 150 plus one, two services, an organ recital and a meal were shared.

“It gave us an opportunity to reflect on what our forefathers did to start the church and the sacrifices they made,” she said. “And to reconnect to a lot of people who were past members who came out to the celebration.”

Schweitzer said the church has 93 baptized members.

“It’s going through what so many of the churches are going through,” she said. “They aren’t growing. We aren’t either.”

She said the best thing about the anniversary is the continuation for 150 years of preaching God’s word.

“That has to be the most important thing. The baptizing of the children, camaraderie which is what a congregation should be,” Schweitzer said. “We’ve been supporting and sustaining one another through the good times and bad times for 150 years.”

The founding of the church was official in 1870 and the current location was built in 1902. The altar is still the same altar that they built when they built this church in 1902. The baptismal font was the original from the church in 1870 and one of the hymn boards is an original.

There were 10 founders of the church. Of those, one of them was the father of the two boys who died. He was 43 and the oldest of the founders.

“The average age was in their mid-30s. The youngest was 22. They homesteaded, had nothing, developed their farms and built the church,” Schweitzer said. “The hardships are unbelievable. One of the founders lost four children within six weeks of each other.”

July 4

(continued from page 15)

fit in sales generated by the visitors to Seward for the Fourth. It is so important that I even named my business Liberty House as a tie in with the Fourth of July celebration. We all missed the real Fourth the year of COVID-19 and were so glad to see it return in person – due primarily to our very dedicated, all volunteer Fourth of July Celebration Committee.”

Phil Bangert, former Fourth of July treasurer and current hospitality chair, said volunteers collaborate all year to put on the celebration. While the virtual celebration was good, it didn’t provide much economic impact.

“The Virtual Fourth of 2020 in Seward did, however, count as a celebration and keep our 150+ plus annual of Fourths in place and on track!” he said. “Plus it is nice to have so many events now officially recorded for future use and we are on to 154th annual Fourth for this year on Monday, July 4, 2022.”

Kolterman said the 2021 celebration included most of the traditional activities.

“In fact, it must have worked well, as the 2021 Seward Fourth of July Celebration was named the Top Ne-



FILE PHOTO

The crowd gathered at the anvil firing July 4 readies for takeoff as the fuse gets shorter.

braska Festival for 2021 by the State of Nebraska Tourism Department and awarded the 2021 Tourism Trophy at the recent State Tourism Conference in Grand Island on Oct. 22,” he said.

“It did catch the committee by surprise as there were so many strong contenders for the award and our celebration was not back at 100% yet in 2021,” Steve Hambek, July 4 Committee member, said. “We were, however, thrilled for the honor and accepted it readily. There are over 200 Fourth of July Celebrations in Nebraska alone, and that doesn’t count all the other annual ethnic festivals and such in Nebraska. To be named the 2021 Top Festival in Nebraska is an honor and one the committee will cherish.”

Jessica Kolterman, recording secretary, said the pandemic was a good reminder of what’s really important.

“Because of the pandemic and the COVID-19 situation, we now realize just how important the little things in life are – such as a being able to be together as family and friends to celebrate our nation’s birth and patriotism,” she said.

The virtual Fourth included over 75 segments, but it wasn’t the same.

“We are all so very happy to be back in full force for 2022 with a complete Fourth!” she said.

Since the Nebraska National Guard Museum’s arrival on the Seward scene five years ago, the Nebraska National Guard Museum has welcomed

a strong partnership with the Seward Fourth of July Celebration.

“The Fourth of July in Seward is our biggest day in attendance, drawing up to 10,000+ visitors on that one day!” Jerry Meyer, Nebraska National Guard Museum historian and member of the Seward Fourth of July Celebration Committee. “We have programed activities and events scheduled for that big July 4 day and capitalize on all of the 50,000 visitors that come to spend the Fourth in Seward, hoping they stop by our wonderful museum facility.

“We participated in the 2020 virtual Fourth in Seward on the internet, but this last year was so much nicer in person and we feel we will be back to full force in 2022. We already are formulating some big activities for 2022 and excited to be part of that day on Monday, July 4, 2022.”

Clark Kolterman said changes or cancellations can happen, but the committee is planning the 2022 Fourth.

“Because of COVID and really missing a Fourth, we now realize how special it is to be together in celebration and it will make the future in-person Seward Fourth of July Celebrations that much more special! Spend the Fourth in Seward!” he said.



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