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STEPHANIE CROSTON/MT

Members of Milford's junior high cross country team spray Lilly Kenning as she runs past during the Milford Invite Sept. 7. Read more on sports.



DOUG CARROLL/MT

Nebraska state spending caps are making it difficult for Milford Public School to meet basic needs, says Superintendent Kevin Wingard.

Milford tax ask up

BY EMILY HEMPHILL
emily@sewardindependent.com

The City of Milford will keep its tax levy flat at 48.2 cents for the 2023-24 fiscal year, with a 0% increase.

However, the city's tax ask will increase 17% to \$726,235, based on its proposed budget.

The change is the result of increased property valuations for 2023-24.

Valuation on property within the city limits increased from \$128,968,021 to \$150,654,932, therefore the same levy rate will generate more revenue for the city budget.

The total proposed operating budget for the coming year is \$10,049,897, 1% lower than last year, with an additional \$2.5 million in cash reserves.

The council held budget worknights on July 24 and 25 to discuss budget needs for the coming year.

Those discussions included a general insurance increase of 9%, a health insurance increase of 12% and a general salary increase of 5% for employees.

Because its tax request is more than the allowable 2% increase over last year, the city is required by law to participate in a countywide joint public tax hearing, set for 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 20, at the Seward Civic Center, 616 Bradford St. in Seward.

The city will hold its own budget and tax request hearings beginning at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 21, at Milford City Hall, 401 First St. in Milford.

The public will have the opportunity to speak and ask questions during both the Sept. 20 and Sept. 21 hearings.

City OKs funding request

BY EMILY HEMPHILL
emily@sewardindependent.com

At its Sept. 5 meeting, the Milford City Council:

- received an annual report from the Seward County Chamber and Development Partnership and approved renewing the city's SCCDP membership, along with a \$12,566 funding request from the SCCDP for the next fiscal year.

(CONTINUED ON 7)

Revenue caps cause struggle with MPS budget

BY EMILY HEMPHILL
emily@sewardindependent.com

New legislation is causing trouble for Milford Public Schools.

The district board of education will vote on its proposed budget later this month, but Superintendent Kevin Wingard said state caps on spending are making it difficult for the school to meet its basic needs.

Wingard will present the budget at a countywide joint public tax hearing at 7 p.m. Sept. 20 at the Seward Civic Center, 616 Bradford St. in Seward.

The joint hearing is a requirement for any taxing entity looking to raise its tax asking more than 2% from last year.

"Our levy's going down, but our tax asking is increasing over the limit for that process," Wingard said, because of increased property valuations.

The Board of Education will hold its own budget and tax hearings beginning at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 27, at Milford Elementary.

The public is invited to attend both hearings to speak or ask

questions related to the budget.

Proposed budget
MPS' proposed budget includes a 95-cent levy across its General, Bond and Special Building funds. The levy is about 3 cents less than last year's.

That means a property owner will pay about \$950 per \$100,000 in valuation, about \$31 less than last year.

However, the district's valuation increased 10.36%, with a total valuation of \$792,030,552 for 2023-24. That's about \$74 million higher than last year.

Because of the valuation increase, MPS' tax request will increase \$482,225 to just over \$7.5 million.

The district projects about \$12.1 million in total spending this school year, an increase of \$1.1 million over last year.

That includes about \$2.5 million in state aid.

Equalization Aid
Unlike other school districts in Seward County, Milford's budget will not see a major influx of foundation aid funding granted by Legislative Bill 583.

The bill passed in the 2023 legislative session after strong encouragement from Gov. Jim Pillen in an attempt to reform property taxes.

It awards school districts \$1,500 in foundation aid per student.

Milford is one of 84 equalized districts in Nebraska, meaning it receives state equalization aid to help make up for its substantially low district valuation.

Milford is the largest district in its conference, but it's second to last in valuation.

Wingard compared MPS, which educates 815 students, to Centennial Public Schools in Utica, another rural school with an enrollment of about 470 students.

"Our valuation in our district is around \$700 million. Theirs is just over \$1.6 billion. They're double our valuation," Wingard said.

The difference is largely because of irrigated farm land in the Centennial district. Centennial can generate much more property tax revenue with a much lower levy — theirs currently sits just above 50 cents.

"We'd have to double

our levy so we'd both have the same amount coming in from our patrons," Wingard said. "That's where the equalization aid comes in."

Because Milford is an equalized school district, it already receives state aid under the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act, better known as the TEEOSA formula.

The foundation aid counts as revenue for MPS, so when plugged into the TEEOSA formula, it actually counts against the district's state aid amount.

"For us, it's a wash," Wingard said.

For comparison, Seward Public Schools will receive \$2.4 million in state aid this year because of the foundation aid. Last year, it received just \$288,134 in state aid — a significant increase of just over \$2.1 million.

Milford will receive only a \$411,546 increase.

"You're going to see the benefits for this for nonequalized vs equalized is very different," Wingard said. "For some schools it's a great

(CONTINUED ON 3)

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Obituary

Marieta M. Roth
Jan. 2, 1941 – Sept. 6, 2023

Marieta Mary Roth, the sixth child born to Harry and Velma (Miller) Roth, on Jan. 2, 1941, went home to be with her Lord and Savior on Sept. 6, 2023, at the age of 82.



Marieta was baptized at East Fairview Mennonite Church on Jan. 24, 1954, where she was a lifelong faithful member. Marieta grew up on a farm south of Milford and she attended country school district #92. As a young lady, Marieta worked at Formfit in Crete and later became a certified nurse's assistant. She spent her career working at the Anna Sunderman Home in Seward.

After retirement, she worked at Crestview Care Center and Sunrise Country Manor, both in Milford. She was a very caring and loving caregiver for "her" residents in the nursing homes. At home, she was always the quiet one, in the background showing her love to family by meeting needs that needed to be done and even ones that didn't need to be done, going above and beyond to show them how much she loved them.

Her hobbies included watching Nebraska football, shopping, doing word searches and crossword puzzles, volunteering at Etcetera Shop in Seward, playing dominos and traveling when the opportunity presented itself. Her favorite travel memory was when she was able to go to the Holy Land and walked where Jesus walked.

Survivors include her brothers, Roger (Nancy) Roth, Beaver Crossing, Lonnie Roth, Joseph Roth, and Leonard Roth, all of Milford; sisters, Janice Oswald, Milford, Ia (Larry) Kremer, Congress, Arizona, Carolyn Miller, Millersburg, Indiana, Sharon (Roger) Lehman, Washington Boro, Pennsylvania; brother-in-law, Cloy and Delores Roth, Cairo; and many nieces, nephews and a host of other relatives and friends.

Marieta was preceded in death by her parents, Harry and Velma Roth; brother and sister-in-law, Herbert and Jeanene Roth; sister, Ora Roth; and brother-in-laws, Larry Miller and Gale Oswald; niece, Audrey Roth; nephew, Darrel Roth; and a great-nephew, Henry Benjamin Izeke.

The funeral service was Sept. 9 at the East Fairview Mennonite Church with burial in the church cemetery. Memorial contributions are suggested to the South Entrance Project at the East Fairview Mennonite Church. Arrangements by Lauber Funeral and Cremation Services.

Wedding

Pohlman – Biggs



Amanda and Grant Biggs

Amanda Pohlman of Omaha and Grant Biggs of Seward were married Aug. 26 at Christ The King Catholic Church in Omaha.

The bride's parents are Brent and Michele Pohlman of Omaha, and the groom's parents are Don and Julie Biggs of Seward.

The matrons of honor were Clara Korensky and Katie Wright, both of Omaha and sisters of the bride. Bridesmaids were Julia Pohlman, Alysa Biggs, Claire Klassen, Elizabeth Clark and Ashley Jacobson. The bride's personal attendants were Carolyn Dinkel, Merissa Roth, Emily Wordekemper and Rachel Jacobson. Charity Pohlman was flowergirl.

The best man was Jordan Biggs of Seward, the brother of the groom. Grooms-men were Zachary Pohlman, Matthew Pohlman, Jacob Schneider, Lucas Ripa, John Sempek and Cody Feist. Ringbearers were Quinten Pohlman, Harrison Conzett, Tanner McGregor and Callahan McGregor.

Ben Ahern, Jake McGregor, Andrew Wright and Max Korensky were ushers.

Following the wedding, guests were invited to dinner and dancing at the Leo Ballroom in Omaha.

Honored guests were grandparents of the bride, Mr. and Mrs. Lou D'Ercole of Omaha and Mr. and Mrs. Ken Pohlman of Omaha, and grandparents of the groom, Mr. and Mrs. Gary McGregor of Seward and Mary Ann Biggs of Hastings.

The couple spent their honeymoon in Capri, Italy.

The couple will live in Omaha, where Grant is an associate with First Capital Partners of Omaha and Amanda is a content strategist with Creighton University in Omaha.

Real estate

Information taken from records filed with the Seward County clerk.

Sept. 1 – 5
Mitchell Gabel to Philip Clements and Kristin Clements, Lot 10 and the S1/2 Lot 11, Block 4, W.W. Cox's Addition to Seward. DS \$396

I.H. Feary Building, LLC, to JA Syndicate Co., LLC, Lots 10-11 Block 27, Seward. DS \$843.75
Ronald E. Page and Babs J.

Page to Anne Haines and Steven Haines, Lot 8 and the N1/2 Lot 9, Block 4, Mary R. Spear's Addition to Seward. DS \$427.50

Andrea C. Beckman and Jeffrey L. Beckman to Andrea C. Beckman and Jeffrey L. Beckman, trustees, Lot 3, Valley View West First Addition to Milford. DS exempt

Kenneth L. Luebbe to Denny Wullenwaber and Cheri Wullenwaber, Lot B, Administrative

Replay of Lot 2, Luebbe-Martin Addition to Seward. DS \$78.75
Kenneth L. Luebbe to Brian A. Vanderslice, Lot C, Administrative Replat of Lot 2, Luebbe-Martin Addition to Seward. DS \$22.50

Kenneth L. Luebbe to John P. Singleton and Susan A. Singleton, Lot D, Administrative Replat of Lot 2, Luebbe-Martin Addition to Seward. \$22.50

Sheriff's dept.

Information provided by the Seward County Sheriff's Dept. for activities Aug. 27 – Sept. 2.

Summary of calls:
911 misdial 4
Abuse/neglect 3
Accidents w/injuries 2

Arrest-DUI 1
Arrest-DUS 2
Business checks 2
Civil 3
Civil/child custody 2
Extra patrol 5
Field contact 1
Fire/no burn permit 1

Harassment 1
Medical calls 1
Miscellaneous 31
Motorist assists 10
Non-injury accidents 2

Pursuit 1
Reckless driving 12
Suspicious vehicle/person 2
Thefts 3
Traffic control 1
Traffic hazard/debris 2
Traffic stops 41
Village patrols 120
Warrant/arrests 3
Welfare checks 4

Traffic

Information taken from records filed with the Seward County court.

Aug. 28 – Sept. 1

Lali N. Stevens, 23, Omaha, speeding 11-15 mph municipal, \$75 fine.

Steven J. Clark, 59, Yankton, South Dakota, CMV-tire, other, \$50 fine.

Elvis J. Verde Verde, 25, Lincoln, no operator's license/waiverable, \$75 fine.

Tina L. Scott, 46, York, no operator's license/waiverable, \$75 fine.

Gerald F. Dubas, 62, Surprise, overtake/pass stopped school bus, \$500 fine.

County court

Information taken from records filed with the Seward County court.

Aug. 28 – Sept. 1

Joel R. Riley, DUI-alcohol first offense, \$500 fine, nine months probation, revoked license 60 days and ignition interlock device ordered.

Lexi Ann M. Barnhill, 19, Wahoo, disturbing the peace, one year probation.

Johnna T. Foster, 26, Omaha, two counts of driving under suspension before reinstated, \$100 fine on both counts.

Amanda J. Helgoth, 40, Rising City, DUI-alcohol first offense, \$500 fine, nine months probation, revoked license 60 days and ignition interlock device ordered.

Tristin D. Nickel, 19, Western, DUI-alcohol first offense, \$500 fine, seven days jail, revoked license six months and ignition interlock device ordered.

Sean A. Vierya, 30, North Platte, DUI-alcohol first offense, \$500

fine, six months probation, revoked license 60 days and ignition interlock device ordered.

Oscar D. Sanchez, 26, Crete, DUI-alcohol first offense, \$500 fine, two days jail, nine months probation, revoked license 60 days and ignition interlock device ordered, and restitution of \$2,441.14; transporting a child while intoxicated, \$500 fine and nine months probation.

Laura L. Seetin, 52, Gresham, driving under suspension before reinstated, \$100 fine; possess or use drug paraphernalia, \$100 fine.

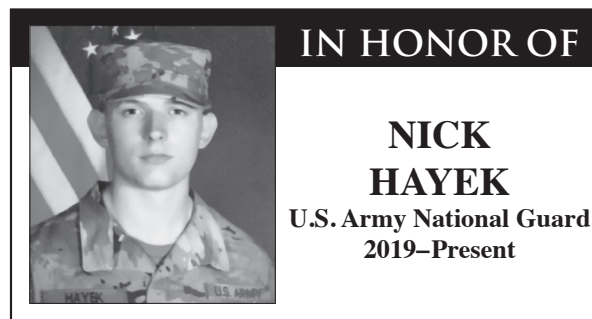
Kimberly A. Hardin, 50, Lincoln, DUI-alcohol first offense, \$500 fine, six months probation, revoked license 60 days and ignition interlock device ordered.

James A. Policky, 41, Seward, driving under suspension before reinstated, 60 days jail and revoked license one year.



Honor your soldier (living or deceased) in the Wednesday, November 8 edition of the Seward County Independent and The Milford Times.

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School district budget

(CONTINUED FROM 1)

infall of cash, but for us, it just didn't compute that way. We did get an increase, but it isn't enough to offset our expenses."

At the Capitol
Milford Board of Education President Dave Welsch said LB 583 wasn't a good fit for equalized districts like Milford.

He worked with Sen. Tom Brandt to introduce a bill what would restore equalization aid to all Nebraska school districts.

"Most urban schools are already equalized, so it would make some adjustments in the formula so they would get more aid," Welsch said.

Foundation aid, he said, creates more equitable funding per student.

"With equalization aid, you're equalizing property tax. Foundation aid does the opposite. It creates more disparity across the state," Welsch said.

He pointed out that the first two words of the TEEOSA formula are "Tax Equity."

"It's property tax equity. That's why that bill was created 33 years ago," Welsch said.

Their proposed bill would bring levies in high-levy districts down more than those in low-levy districts.

"It would bring the levies closer across the state. Now the levies are going to be farther apart," he said, pointing again to the differences between districts like Milford and Centennial, which have roughly a 40-cent difference in their levies.

"Foundation aid basically helped schools with low levies already. It didn't help the schools with higher levies," Welsch said.

Revenue caps
Legislators also passed a 3% cap on the amount a school district

is allowed to increase its budget. This year, the school board could vote to override the 3% and ask for an additional 6%.

"We did do that, and we're asking for the majority of that to balance our budget," Wingard said.

He said the revenue caps are preventing MPS from having enough cash on hand to pay its bills.

The district postponed payment on some of its August bills for supplies and insurance, Wingard said, because it needed to ensure funding was available through September.

"In September, we get a large amount of our revenue from the county," he said.

That's if everything goes as planned. Wingard said there's a fine line between making it work and a budget breakdown.

"If we didn't receive our tax ask from the county or state aid doesn't come in, we'll have trouble paying our bills," he said. "When you look at our cash flow, it's the tightest it's ever been."

Wingard directly attributed the problem to revenue caps.

The general recommendation is that school districts should keep a minimum of two months' expenses as a cash balance.

"We're way below that. That's why our tax asking is where it is this year, because we don't have a choice," Wingard said.

He said proposals are planned to keep the revenue cap at 3% again next year but eliminate a school board's ability to exceed the cap by another 6%.

"We're hearing rumors that they want to ratchet it down to just 3% in the future, which would be very, very harmful for our district," Wingard said.

Another cap would knock MPS' cash

balance even lower and prevent the district from completing necessary projects like building repairs or keeping enough staff to accommodate the district's rapid enrollment growth.

"We have no major building projects planned, and that's part of our issue," Wingard said. "We have building issues that we need to address but we don't have the funds for."

Some of those issues include expanding classroom space – right now, the high school uses portable classrooms outside because there isn't enough space inside the building – and updating old utility equipment like heating and air systems.

Increased expenses
MPS enrollment has increased substantially over the past 25 years, from about 660 students in 1999 to 815 students today.

Since 1987, only four classes have lost student enrollment between kindergarten and graduation. Every other class has gained students – sometimes as many as 23 additional students in one class.

Since 2015, the district has grown by 107 students.

"We've added probably seven teachers in the last 10 years, plus paraeducators," Wingard said.

Staffing-related expenses make up 82% of the district's budget.

Of the proposed budget increase, 92% will go toward staffing costs.

"We only have a \$40,000 increase in budget for building, utilities and all other items," Wingard said.

The staff expenses come in the form of payroll, benefits like health insurance and retirement, and additional staff needed to provide services for students with special needs.

Wingard said the district has been intention-

al about increasing pay and benefits packages for certified staff.

Until recently, the district was one of a handful that didn't pay 100% of an employee's health insurance costs. It has since met that benchmark to keep up with other schools.

"When you start losing staff candidates because you're not paying as much as other school districts, that's a change that's affected our budget," Wingard said.

Health insurance premiums increased 6.87% this year and have averaged a 5.47% increase the past five years.

"When 82% of your budget is staff-related, it doesn't take long for these things to add up," Wingard said.

He commended the board of education for continuing to increase pay for support professionals, as well.

"I think our school board has done a wonderful job giving salary increases to reflect the job they do. They do a lot for our district," Wingard said. "They could leave us at any time if we're not giving salary increases. We have a great staff, and we don't want to lose them."

Additionally, the district has seen a jump in the number of students requiring special education services with an increase from 74 students in 2015 to 154 students in 2022.

The district previously received state reimbursement for only 40% of special education expenses. Under LB 583, that will increase to 80%.

"We still have to budget it, spend it, then we get reimbursed a year in arrears," Wingard said, adding that showing this type of funding in the budget does not equate to having the money available to spend throughout the year.

Other costs have gone

up, too, like fuel, books and meals.

"Diesel fuel and utilities alone increase for everybody every year," he said.

Local control

Wingard expressed frustration with the legislature for taking authority away from local school boards with what he called "blanket policies."

"Not all school districts are the same," he said. "When you hear the general statement about how public schools are overspending, I wish they'd go to that specific school and see what's affecting them."

Historically, Milford's school board has taken a conservative approach to budgeting and the district often comes in under budget at the end of the year.

MPS has a per-pupil cost of \$13,738, which is \$1,375 below the state average.

"We've had some pretty small increases and expenditures and even some negative expenditures," Wingard said. "Our board has been fiscally responsible to our taxpayers – almost to the point of being too fiscally responsible – and now these caps are coming back to hurt us."

Wingard said he believes school board members should be the ones making budget de-

isions, not legislators.

"That's why we have elections and local boards," Wingard said.

Welsch has served on Milford's school board for 25 years. He served on a country school board for seven years prior.

He said he's noticed a shift away from support for public schools in the legislature over the past 10 years.

He said he's frustrated by the state's requirement that school districts participate in the joint public tax hearings, which arose from LB 644 in 2021.

"It's been dubbed the 'Truth in Taxation bill,' which is very offensive to me as a school board member," Welsch said. "We have a budget hearing and a tax hearing every year. We can't force people to come, but now they say we haven't been telling the truth."

Wingard said if the caps continue, the district's only options to balance the budget will be to reduce staff, override the revenue cap by a vote of the public or pass a bond issue.

"We're going to have to do something down the road if these caps continue," he said. "If they take the flexibility away of our local board making these decisions, it's going to hurt us further."

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150th Program 3:30 p.m.
Music by Joker Band, 8-11:30 p.m.
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Thinking about the one that got away

BY AMY HAUSMAN
amy@friendsentinel.com

It started in 1999 in an uptight, affluent Milford High School biology class.

It was summer school before senior year, and I was the nerdy girl with Lisa Loeb glasses who needed to take extra credits so I could keep my journalism elective courses.

Clay was not in the class for the same reason. Although discerningly clever, Clay was too smart for his own good. He was a bad boy who had reckless disregard for rules, curfews and did what he wanted. I could not help but swoon over his ginger curls, baggy skater jeans and care-free spirit.

In a senior class of more than 400, we knew the same people but never had hung out before that class. A few weeks before summer school began a mutual friend of ours dragged him to my dance recital, so I suppose he did know who I was although I hoped he did not remember the Egyptian costume I wore that day.

Clay always seemed

so cool and out of my league, so when we started studying together that summer it was my teenage dream.

I was painfully shy, insecure and as nervous as they come. I remember sitting next to him and wishing he would hold my hand. The idea of Clay kissing me was an utter fantasy. Nothing happened that summer and when school started in the fall, Clay was not there.

Rumors circulated about what happened to the high school maverick, but all I knew is he was gone and I concluded the sparks I felt must have been imagined. When Clay did not emerge by the time HOCO rolled around I asked a buddy to the senior dance to avoid the ultimate adolescent humiliation of going in a group.

Years went by.

It was 2009 and two children later, I was divorced from the buddy I went to the senior dance with. To cope, I buried myself in my career, and a rabbit hole research project led me to a name that I had always wondered about: Clay. It had been a decade.

What do you say when that much time goes by? Do you just ignore it? But something in me could not, and I wrote him a letter

(YES, a letter. This was a long time ago!). And... Clay wrote me back and it was the same sparks that flew in the high school lab.

We exchanged letters for over a year while he moved around the country.

When Clay and I finally saw each other face-to-face when he came to visit his parents in 2011, it was like every love song you ever heard. For about three years when he would travel back to Nebraska from Arizona, we were like magnets and there was nothing that could stop the inevitable connection between us.

Each visit home was like no time had passed at all. But we all know you can't stop time and we both met other people. Both of our relationships fell away and two years ago, Clay reached out to me after not communicating for seven years.

The magnetic pull is still there and it feels like we are naive 17-year-olds. We are grown ups now (well, kind of) and realize the world is not as perfect as the rose colored safety glasses that we wore in our class 24 years ago. He still lives in Arizona and I am telling you, ladies, the desert heat has nothing on his hotness without him even trying.

How is it possible to only get better looking with age? We aren't defined as anything other than the one person I want to give my precious time to. Distance and full lives make it hard. We have hurt each other badly yet been each other's anchors in our own personal comeback stories. Two human boomerangs.

Today, Clay is in Nebraska and I want to pause time. I want to make him fall in love with Crete and show him our elote can hang, to convince him a sunset full of hot air balloons dotted around mountains is just as beautiful as rainbows cast off pivots in field corn.

For him to remember the goosebumps a Husker tunnel walk brings. For us to realize two stubbornly, independent people that don't easily bend can forgive, trust each other and commit.

Like the song says in another life, I would make Clay stay but the reality is he may always be the one that got away. Even if that is how it turns out, he is the best supporting character in my story and nothing will make me edit him out.

Stay tuned for a steamy romance novel in all my spare time.

Getting answers for POW/MIA families

BY PETE RICKETTS
U.S. Senator

Over a half a century ago, President

John F. Kennedy once said, "A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers."

National POW/MIA Recognition Day on Sept. 15 is an opportunity to honor and remember the women and men who may be missing but must never be forgotten. Americans who are Prisoners of War (POW) or Missing in Action (MIA) deserve to be honored and recognized for their sacrifices on behalf of our nation.

Their families – who sometimes go the rest of their lives waiting for news of their loved ones – also deserve special recognition and our deepest appreciation. This year, I want to highlight a Nebraska story that reminds us of those sacrifices.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Larry Alfred Zich, a native of Lincoln, was a pilot during the Vietnam War. On April 3, 1972, he was co-piloting a combat support mission in South Vietnam with three other crew members. The Huey helicopter they were flying went off the radar and was never heard from again. It was Zich's 24th birthday.

For 51 years, Zich's family and friends have lived in a world of unknowns. Neither his remains nor the helicopter were recovered. For 51 years, his family had to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays with no news.

Last year, that finally changed. In 1988, a Vietnamese refugee turned over human remains from individuals who had allegedly died in a plane crash. It wasn't until nearly 35 years later, on Oct. 25, 2022, that the U.S. Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) conclusively confirmed some of the remains belonged to Zich.

In March of this year, DPAA announced the identification of Zich's remains. When his widow, Debbie Jensen, saw the news in Nebraska, she had no idea how to get hold of the Department of Defense. She reached out to my office for help getting in touch to ensure he would be brought back home to

National POW/MIA Recognition Day on Sept. 15 is an opportunity to honor and remember the women and men who may be missing but must never be forgotten.

Nebraska.

Our team of dedicated casework staff connected her with the appropriate contacts at the Department of Defense. As a result, Chief Warrant Officer Zich was properly laid to rest with full military honors at Lincoln Memorial Cemetery on June 6, 2023.

Zich is just one of the tens of thousands of service members who have not come home and whose status remains unclear. As of May 2023, there are more than 81,000 Americans missing from conflicts dating back to World War II. The friends and family of these women and men deserve our prayers and our thanks for the sacrifices they have made.

Nebraska has a rich history of supporting our military. Offutt Air Force Base is home to one of three Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency labs in the U.S. These labs analyze and inventory skeletal remains, identify bones, and determine a biological profile to identify unknown service members who died in previous wars.

The National Defense Authorization Act I recently supported would authorize funding for the planning and design of a new lab facility at Offutt so more families like Zich's can get the answers they deserve.

As governor and now senator, I am constantly fighting to keep our state one of the best for active and retired military to live, work, and raise a family. I signed paperwork naming Nebraska's section of U.S. Highway 20 as the "Nebraska Medal of Honor Highway."

The NDAA also secures a 5.2% pay raise for servicemembers. I'm also a supporter of the Major Richard Star Act, which provides injured combat veterans with their full benefits.

Local voice is important in government functions

BY SEN. JANA HUGHES
Dist. 24

In the Nebraska Legislature, each of us who are privileged to serve represent approximately the same number of voters.

However, the districts we represent are unique and different. They are also not the same size geographically. District 43, currently represented by Sen. Tom Brewer, is larger than nine other individual states: Maryland, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Hawaii, Connecticut, Delaware and Rhode Island.

Meanwhile, the three largest counties in terms of population, which are home to more than 57% of our state's citizens, are represented by 20 of the 49 senators.

This is not to disparage the Unicameral or to advocate for another system – far from it. At recent conferences, I heard directly from my fellow legislators from other states that they are envious of Nebraska's system of government.

Every bill introduced here receives a public hearing and we don't have middle of the night "compromises" between two legislative bodies that churn out entirely new legislation from what was initially passed. We also aren't paying double for a separate House and Senate, which are effectively the same thing at the state level.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that each state's electoral

districts have to represent roughly the same population, making it impossible to duplicate the structure of the U.S. Senate, with its two senators per state.

While 57% of our state's population is currently represented by 40% of the senators, future redistricting could potentially align the number of districts more closely with population, putting a majority of senators inside the three largest counties. To maintain a healthy balance between what we consider urban and rural parts of our state, it is imperative that we do not take away local control from our cities, towns and villages or from our school districts and counties.

The local voice is not only important, it is appropriate. Creating a system where the legislature is micromanaging the budget for a county's road maintenance, the local village's budget, or what a public school decides can go on its lunch menu is not efficient or effective.

One reason our Unicameral has stood the test of time is that we have maintained a very strong system of local government. The folks on the county board, the village council or the school board are all elected by their neighbors. They are also directly accountable to the people who live side by side with them in their communities.

Strong local government also prevents a bloated state bureaucracy. There is no need to grow state agencies or create new ones if the decisions and oversight are conducted at the local level. For the same reasons, strong local government enhances our ability to balance the state budget, keep state taxes low and solve local problems quickly.

There is a proposal being circulated for signatures that aims to replace all taxes, including local sales and property taxes, with a consumption tax, otherwise known as the EPIC tax. Property tax has been a hot topic for a good while.

The Legislature adopted legislation this past session to lessen property taxes' burden on Nebraskans and more needs to be done, including looking into soaring property valuations as Gov. Jim Pillen has begun to do with his recently announced task force.

EPIC sounds like something that is huge, grand and even a little daunting and is not the term I'd use to name or describe a new tax. Nonetheless, while most everyone agrees that reducing taxes on everyday Nebraskans is a noble goal, with EPIC the trade for not having to pay income, sales, property or inheritance taxes is that all control over local budgets will be whisked away to Lincoln to be jointly controlled by the governor and the Legislature.

I was born and raised in District 24. I feel far more comfortable having decisions about our schools, counties and local communities being made by my neighbors than I would with them being made by 49 senators in Lincoln. Just something to think about.

If I can be of assistance to you in any way, do not hesitate to contact my office by email at jhughes@leg.ne.gov, by phone at (402) 471-2756 or on Facebook: Senator Jana Hughes.



Sen. Jana Hughes

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Eagles sweep individual golds at home meet

BY STEPHANIE CROSTON
scroston@sewardindependent.com

It's been awhile since Milford hosted a cross country meet in Milford, and the Eagles took advantage of a home course to win three of the top four spots Sept. 7.

"I thought it was a really successful meet," Coach Jake Kment said. "It went pretty well."

He said the course, which was at Thornridge Golf Course, ran fast, so most of the MHS runners turned in personal best times.

The Milford boys took home the team title, besting Minden by three points, and the individual crown. Sophomore Avery Carter won his first career cross country race, finishing in 16:37.1, a personal best time by about 30 seconds, Kment said.

"He's a student of the sport," Kment said. "He had a good summer and he's seeing that pay off."

Senior Gavin Dunlap wasn't far behind, running a PR of 16:53.9. Kment said it's hard for runners like Dunlap, who is a senior, to run PRs because they're already at the top of their



Milford runners Sally Burkey (112), Elsa Schweitzer (125) and Kisa Schauer (center) run in a group at the start of the Milford Invite Sept. 7.

STEPHANIE CROSTON/MT

game. "He does everything

right," Kment said. "He's come a long way. He's such a confident runner now. He's very consistent."

Carter and Dunlap took control of the race early, Kment said, and kept the pedal down throughout. Dunlap finished about 40 seconds ahead of third place.

Garrett Freeman was the third Eagle to finish and placed eighth in 18:14.2, a PR by about 30 seconds. Kment said Freeman had a good summer, as well. Last year was his first running cross country and with injuries during the season, he never got momentum.

"He looks great right now," Kment said. "He already broke his season goal."

Freshman Sylus Rakow just missed a medal with his 16th-place finish but ran a solid race, the coach said.

Kellen Lovitt continues to improve his times and placed 29th. Jack Stahl was 36th and is running through a nagging knee problem, Kment said.

Jonny Kohout cut almost a minute off his previous best time. He came out for cross coun-

try late and is making good strides, Kment said. Blake Otradovsky rounded out the Eagles, completing his first-ever race, the coach said.

Lilly Kenning continued to run well, winning the girls' race in 19:08.2, an overall PR for her, Kment said.

"She can keep the pedal to the floor when she's running alone," he said.

The Milford junior finished 55 seconds ahead of second place.

Ellison Piening

placed fifth for Milford in 22:22.4. While her time was not quite a PR, she is getting closer to that mark, Kment said.

Ambry Armbrust and Adyson Kroese both earned medals for Milford, with Armbrust placing 11th and Kroese 15th. It was Armbrust's second varsity medal as a freshman, and Kroese's first.

Kisa Schauer ran a big PR, Kment said, but finished just outside the medals in 17th place. Kment said she's cut two

minutes in two weeks.

"She's hitting her stride now," he said.

Elsa Schweitzer finished 19th and Sally Burkey 22nd, both setting new PRs. Zoey Whitford was the final Eagle to run and bested her goal of 40 minutes, the coach said.

"The top seven were in the top half," he said. "Three through seven have been really improving. They were an unknown at the beginning of the season. It's been a pleasant surprise."

The girls' team finished second in the standings, just one point behind Palmyra.

"It's a game of inches," Kment said. "Little things could change the results. This was a good moment to see that."

The Eagles will run at Hidden Hills Country Club in Geneva Thursday, Sept. 14. The girls' varsity will run at 4:45 p.m., with the boys at 5:15 p.m. The JV will run after the boys' varsity.

Kment said it will be a tough meet with good teams including two of the top boys' teams in Class C - Gothenburg and Lincoln Christian. Hastings St. Cecilia, Sandy Creek and Malcolm also have some of the state's top athletes, as well.

Milford Invite

Girls' team scores—Palmyra 23, Milford 24, Minden 36, Wilber-Clatonia 78, Malcolm 80

Milford—Lilly Kenning, first, 19:08.2; Ellison Piening, fifth, 22:22.4; Ambry Armbrust, 11th, 23:54.5; Adyson Kroese, 15th, 24:19.3; Kisa Schauer, 17th, 24:22.1; Elsa Schweitzer, 19th, 24:33.9; Sally Burkey, 22nd, 24:54.7; Zoey Whitford, 43rd, 36:26.8

Boys' team scores—Milford 27, Minden 30, Malcolm 48, Palmyra 49, Wilber-Clatonia 74, Louisville 91, Exeter-Milligan/Friend 130

Milford—Avery Carter, first, 16:37.1; Gavin Dunlap, second, 16:53.9; Garrett Freeman, eighth, 18:14.2; Sylus Rakow, 16th, 19:05.0; Kellen Lovitt, 29th, 20:01.7; Jack Stahl, 36th, 20:22.8; Jonny Kohout, 43rd, 21:00.9; Blake Otradovsky, 72nd, 28:45.0



STEPHANIE CROSTON/MT

Milford's Garrett Freeman strides along the course Sept. 7 at the Milford Invite.

Area Churches

Bellwood Mennonite Church

520 S. B St. • Milford • 761-2709

Pastor Steve Griffin
stephenpaulgriffin@gmail.com
www.bellwoodchurch.org

Sunday School (Adult & Jr./Sr. High)9:15 a.m.
Sunday Worship10:00 a.m.
Children's Church10:00 a.m.
Grounded Youth (Wednesday)
7th-12th grade7:00-8:30 p.m.
Christian Montessori School Ages 3-6 • 761-3095

Beth-El Community Church

115 N. F St. • Milford • 761-3610

Pastor Joshua Jones

Sunday School9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship10:30 a.m.
Youth Group (Select Sundays)6:30 p.m.

Family Life Assembly of God

303 S. A St. • Milford • 761-2664

Pastor Lamoin Lytle • familylifemilford.com

Connect9:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship10:00 a.m.
KidLife & Vertical Youth Wed., 6:30 p.m.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

2668 Pioneers Road (1 mi. west of Milford) • 761-3146

Pastor Steve Stork
www.goodshepherd-milford.org

Sunday School—PreK-4th Grade
(during school year)9:00 a.m.
Sunday Adult Bible Study9:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship10:00 a.m.
Monday Worship6:30 p.m.
Adult Bible Study Thurs., 8:30 a.m.
Confirmation Class
(during school year) Wed., 6:30 p.m.

Grace Missionary Church

501 Fairway Drive • Milford • 761-2084

Senior Pastor Andy Petro • andypetro.mwd@gmail.com
Associate Pastor Levi Petro • leviticuspetro@gmail.com
www.gracemissionary.org

Sunday School9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship10:30 a.m.
Midweek Prayer Tue., 7:00 p.m.
Awana K-6th Grade
(during school year) Wed., 7:00 p.m.
Sola Jr. & Sr. High
(during school year) Wed., 7:00 p.m.
5th Quarter
(Youth Center after home games) 9:00 p.m.

Milford Mennonite Church

920 Third St. • Milford • 761-2244

Pastor Tim Springer
milfordmennonite@gmail.com

Sunday Worship10:00 a.m.
Children's Church10:00 a.m.

Milford United Methodist Church

610 Second St. • Milford • 761-2375

Pastor Angela DeFisher
umcmilfordne@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/MilfordUnitedMethodistChurch
Little Leaps of Faith • 402-761-3380
Sunday School9:15 a.m.
Sunday Worship10:30 a.m.
Community Food Pantry
Third Tuesday every month6:00-7:15 p.m.

To find out how to list your church,
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Valentino's

Seward Car Wash

Museum to celebrate Constitution Day Sept. 15

The Nebraska National Guard Museum is planning to celebrate U.S. Constitution Day Friday, Sept. 15, with two presentations by the Shelia Collins of Davey, a U.S. Constitution scholar and lecturer, at the museum. The events are both free and open to the public and will be at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., and each last for about one hour.

The morning session will have an emphasis for the elementary level/middle school level students, and the afternoon session will be offered for middle school/high school level

students. The event will feature a hands-on presentation by Collins, as she shares materials from eight tables surrounding the audience.

The event is sponsored by the Nebraska National Guard Historical Society and compliments the annual U.S. Constitution Day on Sunday, Sept. 17.

For more information contact Gerald D. "Jerry" Meyer, NENG Historian, at (402) 309-8763. The Society encourages advance registration of classes, if they plan to attend.

HAPPENINGS

SEPT. 13

BINGO AT MILFORD SENIOR CENTER: Nutrition Bingo is called by Devin from Aging Partners on Wednesday, Sept. 13, at 12:30 p.m. at the Milford Senior Center.

SEPT. 14

COUNTY REPUBLICANS HOLD MONTHLY MEETINGS: The Seward County Nebraska Republicans invite any registered Republicans to attend monthly meetings on the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. Meeting locations may vary. Each month, meeting information and location will be posted on the Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SewardNEGOP.

INVITATION TO MEET AT THE GATHERING TABLE: Make plans to meet at The Gathering Table (Milford Mennonite Fellowship Hall at 920 F St). The table is set on the second Thursday of each month for this complementary meal. Come anytime between 5:30 and 7 p.m.

SEPT. 17

SITE CLEANUP: The Blue River Historical District is starting its site clean-up for the Log Cabin on Sunday, Sept. 17, from 1 – 4 p.m. at 2764 Isaak Walton Rd. Participants should wear work clothes and sturdy shoes and bring gloves. Bug spray will be provided. All volunteers are welcome.

SEPT. 20

POTATO BAKE: Milford Senior Center's potato bake will be Wednesday, Sept. 20, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

SEPT. 21

CAR CLUB MEETS MONTHLY: The Seward Good Life Car Club will meet Thursday, Sept. 21, at the Dragon Palace on Seward Street just west of the square at 6 p.m. All car enthusiasts are welcome.

SEPT. 22

BUDDY CHECK: A social gathering of veterans dedicated to reducing and eliminating veteran suicide will be from 7 – 9 p.m. at Bottle Rocket Brewing Company in Seward. The group meets monthly on the 22nd.

SEPT. 24

SENATORS TO SPEAK: Hear from state senators Jana Hughes and Danielle Conrad, both Seward High graduates, as they discuss their interest in politics and service to the Nebraska Legislature during a "Women in Politics" presentation at 2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 24, at Seward Memorial Library. The presentation is co-sponsored by the Seward County League of Women Voters and the library. All are welcome.

ONGOING

G.I. CUP OF JOE: A veterans coffee will be every Wednesday from 7:30 – 9:30-ish at the Spare Time Lounge in Seward.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, AL-ANON MEETINGS: Alcoholics Anonymous groups will meet at the following times: Mondays at noon at the Civic Center in Seward; Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. at Faith Lutheran Church in Seward; Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Civic Center; Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Bellwood Mennonite Church

in Milford; Fridays at 7:30 p.m. at the Civic Center; Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Civic Center; and Sundays at 9 a.m. at the Civic Center and 7 p.m. at Faith Lutheran Church in Seward. Al-Anon meetings are scheduled at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays at the Bellwood Mennonite Church in Milford and at 7:30 p.m. Fridays at the Civic Center in Seward.

COFFEE AND FELLOWSHIP: Come for coffee and fellowship Monday through Friday from 8 to 11 a.m. at the Milford Senior Center. Coffee, tea, pastries and other treats are served.

LUNCH SERVED AT MILFORD SENIOR CENTER: Lunch is served Monday through Friday at noon at the Milford Senior Center. Reservations must be made one day in advance by calling or leaving a message at (402) 761-3367. Meals for seniors ages 60 and older have a suggested contribution of \$7 for regularly scheduled meals. Meals for guests under age 60 are \$8. All are welcome.

YOGA CLASSES: Three different yoga classes are offered weekly at the Milford Senior Center, led by Kelly Haney. Offerings include: Adapted Yoga on Mondays at 9 a.m.; Assisted Yoga on Wednesdays at 9 a.m.; and Next Level Yoga on Fridays at 9 a.m.

TAI CHI CLASSES: Join Tai Chi classes on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. at the Milford Senior Center. Enhance your muscle strength, flexibility, balance and aerobic conditioning.

SHS grads to speak on role as senators

BY EMILY HEMPHILL
emily@sewardindependent.com

Women have long played an influential role in politics in Seward County, in Nebraska and across the United States.

The Seward County League of Women Voters has focused its programming this year on the contributions of women in political service.

The League, along with Seward Memorial Library, will host a

"Women in Politics" presentation on Sunday, Sept. 24, at 2 p.m. at the library.

State senators Jana Hughes of District 24 and Danielle Conrad of District 46 will discuss their interest in politics and their service to the Nebraska Legislature.

Both Hughes and Conrad are Seward High School graduates.

This non-partisan event will be in the library's lower-level conference room.

All are welcome to attend.



Navigating classroom snacks amidst new USDA guidelines

BY HANNA CHRISTENSEN
screporter@sewardindependent.com

The USDA Approved Smart Snacks in School guidelines have been updated, changing the way rewards, birthday treats and celebrations are handled in schools. Gone are the days of frosted cupcakes loaded with sprinkles and love.

The guidelines are peanut and tree nut aware. Sodium content, sugar content,

fat content and calorie content are taken into account when making this determination.

Additionally, grain products such as granola bars and Cheez-Its must have whole grains as their first ingredient. Non-grain products must have a fruit, vegetable, dairy product or protein food as their first ingredient or have at least ¼ cup of fruit and/or vegetables.

You can see if your snack fits in the criteria by going to the Smart Snack Calculator at <https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator>.

Examples of permitted snacks include a serving/individual package of the following:

Popchips (sour cream & onion, barbecue potato and sea salt flavors only)
Whole grain rice

krispie treats
Scooby Doo Graham Crackers
Elf Grahams
Celery with 1 tbsp of sunbutter
Rold Gold Heartzel pretzels
Materne Go Go Squeeze
Sun Chips Harvest Cheddar Snack Mix
Del Monte fruit cups- no sugar added
Musselman's Natural Unsweetened Applesauce
Sun Maid Natural Raisins
Nabisco Teddy Grahams- 100 calorie packs
Apple with 1 tbsp of sunbutter
Sarento string cheese
Original Baked! Lays
Cheetos Fantastix!
Baked snacks- flamin hot (whole grain)
Simply Chex brand cheddar snack mixes



2023-2024 Back to School Section coming September 27.

Milford funding

(CONTINUED FROM 1)

- held a public hearing and ultimately approved a catering license for VS Investments Inc. (formerly Sheri's Grill and Bar, now Uptown Tavern).

- heard from community member Ethel Svoboda about reinstating postseason senior water aerobics. No action was taken, and the matter will be discussed further between the pool board and senior center board.

- hired Tanner Paap as a full-time maintenance employee at \$17.50 per hour, pending a background check.

- tabled a resolution to participate in the Nebraska Cooperative Liquid Assets Securities System, an investment pool program for local governments, until more information about the program can be obtained.

- passed an ordinance to rezone a 1.76-acre parcel of land east and southeast of Bellwood Mennonite Church from Residential 1 to Mixed Use to be used for a childcare center. The ac-

tion was approved at the council's August meeting, but an ordinance was required to make it official.

- passed an ordinance to change the start time for which beer can be sold within the

city limits on Sundays. Sales may now begin at 6 a.m. instead of 10 a.m. in alignment with state statutes. The change was to accommodate earlier start times for events at Thornridge Golf Course.

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- Lee's Refrigeration
- Marlin & Rita Luebbe
- Matt Krenk
- Mike & Deb Berg
- Milford Dental Clinic
- Nebraska Equipment, Inc.
- Nebraska Harvest Center, Inc.
- Pizza Kitchen
- Plum Creek Seed Services, LLC
- Rebecca Hasty
- RG Investments
- Rhonda Ficke
- Seward Animal Hospital
- Seward County Farm Bureau
- Sharon Gade
- Svoboda Chiropractic
- Thrivent
- Tim & Michelle Winkelmann
- Tomes Insurance Agency
- Uptown Tavern Sports Bar & Grill
- Volzke Funeral Home
- Wehrs Feed Yard
- Zabka-Perdue Funeral Home

To our donors who may still be working on a contribution, your continued support is greatly appreciated.

Building Bridges

Organization connects nonprofits across county

BY EMILY HEMPHILL
emily@sewardindependent.com

Seward County Bridges has connected the community with nonprofits and service organizations for the past 25 years.

The organization strives for a simple goal: To make life better in Seward County.

“It’s really so that nonprofits in the county can focus on their mission,” Bridges Director Laurie Sherman said.

The organization provides fiscal management and a board structure that allows other groups to operate as 501(c)(3) nonprofits, which gives them the benefit of federal tax exemption when they accept donations.

“Often they don’t have the manpower or the volunteer hours to manage all the financial aspects. We can provide the board so they don’t have to find members. We file their tax returns,” Sherman said. “We can provide all of those services for them so they can focus on their mission.”

Bridges acts as an umbrella over 15 independent nonprofits and four county-run programs, but the program isn’t well-recognized in the community.

That’s the point, Sherman said. “We want Bridges to kind of float in the background,” she said.

Sherman is the organization’s only staff member, and her position is made possible by a contract through the Seward County Chamber and Development Partnership.

Part of her job includes managing two grants, a federal block grant and a community crime prevention grant.

The grants help support programs like DARE, TeamMates in Seward and Milford public schools, pre-trial diversion classes and suicide prevention efforts.

When it comes to nonprofits, Bridges accepts donations earmarked for a certain organization, then routes the funds to that nonprofit.

Donors may write a check to Seward County Bridges and designate which organization the funds are for in the memo line.

“We’re in the process of setting up PayPal and Venmo,” Sherman said, to make it easier for donors to give online.

Bridges was first incorporated on Sept. 28, 1998, with a board of 15 residents from all over the county.

According to the “History of Bridges” written in 2005, “Their goal is to provide better communication among community members, gather data on the needs of the county, provide grant writing for programs and projects that will enhance the lives of citizens within the county and provide programs for families and youth that enhance the lives of county citizens.”

The first Bridges survey of the community found that alcohol and tobacco use among teenagers was a top concern.

The organization worked to provide prevention and intervention programs for youth as it began partnering with schools, businesses,

Seward County Bridges Organizations

4-H Afterschool (UNL Extension)
Foster Friends
Goehner Centennial Scholarship
Jays Club
Milford Kiwanis
Nora Neff Dream Dress Scholarship
Read To Me
Rural Workforce Housing Fund
Seward County Chamber
and Development Partnership
Seward Christmas Festival

Seward County Genealogical Society
Seward-ish Giving Tree
Seward Kiwanis
Suicide Prevention Coalition
Utica Community Foundation

County Programs

Child Abuse and Neglect
First Jobs Seward
Pretrial Diversion
Victim’s Advocate

churches and community members to build upon existing programs and implement new ones.

“This collaborative effort brought together entities that had never been together before in Seward County,” the history said. “Youth and the older generation have found each other through mentoring, tutoring, and after school programs.”

Sherman said one goal of Bridges is to help organizations get started, then let them grow.

“CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) started under Bridges. Lots of times when you’re just starting a program, it’s overwhelming. If we can get the program started and then launch them out on their own, that’s what has happened,” she said.

Other well-known projects got their start under Bridges as well, including the Seward Wellness Center, Independence Landing, Family Nights, Scare at the Fair, the former Seward Youth Center and the Seward First Impressions committee.

The Bridges board meets the fourth Monday of each month, with new board members and new organizations welcome to apply.

“If there’s any organization or people who are thinking about starting an organization, please reach out. We’d be happy to help them get started,” Sherman said. “We’re here to better the quality of life in the county. That’s really the main purpose.”

For more information, email bridgesewardcounty@gmail.com.

Nomination process open for 2023 Young Nebraskans Awards

Connecting Young Nebraskans is inviting nominations of exemplary young professionals deserving of a 2023 Young Nebraskans Award.

Young Nebraskans Awards celebrate talented, influential young Nebraskans who are making a positive impact in their workplaces and communities. Awards will be presented for the following categories: CYN Network Weaver, Young Profes-

sional of the Year, Community Involvement and Impact, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Leadership and Professional Development, and Diversity and Inclusion.

The deadline to submit nominations and self-nominations is Sept. 18. Awardees and individuals receiving an honorable mention will be notified by Sept. 25.

Awardees will be recognized at the 2023 CYN Summit on Oct. 19 at the Younes Hospitality Campus in Kearney.

To learn more and fill out a nomination form, visit <https://connectingyoungnebraskans.weebly.com/young-nebraskans-awards.html>.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Meetings

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE:
Regular Business Meeting Seward County Ag. Society Monday, September 18, 2023 7:00 p.m. Harvest Hall Conference Room Seward County Fairgrounds
Michael J. Flyr
Secretary, Seward County Ag. Society
SCI/MT— September 06, 13, 2023
ZNEZ

Hearings

CITY OF MILFORD
Milford, Nebraska 68405
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Public Hearing will be held at the meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission of the City of Milford, Nebraska at 7:00 P.M. on Monday, September 25, 2023 at the City Hall Office, 402 1st Street and at the City Council meeting of the City of Milford, Nebraska at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, October 3, 2023 at the City Hall Office, 402 1st St., Milford, which meetings will be open to the public. The public hearing is being held for the following reasons: *To hear testimony in favor of, or opposition to, and to answer questions in relation to request to amend

Section 4.14 Accessory Building and Uses adding Section 4.14.11 Storage/Shipping Containers to the Zoning Regulations. An agenda for such meeting kept continuously current, is available for public inspection at the office of the City Clerk at the City Hall.
Jeanne Hoggins, City Clerk
MT — September 13, 2023
ZNEZ

Minutes

SEPTEMBER 5, 2023 COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
Boards of Commissioner Meetings are held each Tuesday morning in the Seward County Courthouse at 9:00 a.m., except for the first Tuesday of each month when meetings will be held at 8:30 a.m. Notice of each meeting is posted on the Courthouse bulletin board and on the Commissioner’s room door. The agenda for all meetings is kept continually current and is available for public inspection at the County Clerk’s Office during normal business hours. The agenda is held open until one business day prior to the meeting for appearance before the Board. The Board has the right to modify the agenda to include items of an emergency nature only at such public meeting.
CLAIMS ALLOWED

OCTOBER 10, 2023
The Seward County Board of Commissioners convened on September 5, 2023 at 8:30 a.m. Present: Chairperson: John Culver Members: Misty Ahmic, Raegan Hain, Ken Schmieding, Darrell Zabrocki
Deputy County Clerk: Brandy Johnson
Jonathan Jank of the Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership gave an update of his organization. Officials gave updates of their offices.
Approved minutes of August 29 and August 31, 2023. Commissioners gave reports of their activities.
Approved renaming a portion of East Seward Road to Prairie Flower Road.
Approved Conditional Use Permit for an accessory building in A Precinct.
Approved changes to the Safety section of the personnel manual. Executive session was held for personnel.
Discussions were held on surplus items auction/sale, lawn use policy, purchase of sign boards for the Road Department and infrastructure related grants.
Approved the agenda for September 12, 2023 and adjourned at 12:11 p.m.
Brandy Johnson, Deputy County Clerk
SCI/MT — September 13, 2023
ZNEZ

City of Milford
IN
Seward County, Nebraska

NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARING AND BUDGET SUMMARY

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given, in compliance with the provisions of State Statute Sections 13-501 to 13-513, that the governing body will meet on the 21st day of September 2023, at 7:00 o'clock P.M., at Milford City Hall for the purpose of hearing support, opposition, criticism, suggestions or observations of taxpayers relating to the following proposed budget. The budget detail is available at the office of the Clerk during regular business hours.

2021-2022 Actual Disbursements & Transfers	\$	3,762,739.00
2022-2023 Actual/Estimated Disbursements & Transfers	\$	4,551,458.00
2023-2024 Proposed Budget of Disbursements & Transfers	\$	10,049,897.00
2023-2024 Necessary Cash Reserve	\$	2,488,807.00
2023-2024 Total Resources Available	\$	12,538,704.00
Total 2023-2024 Personal & Real Property Tax Requirement	\$	726,235.45
Unused Budget Authority Created For Next Year	\$	115,600.00

Breakdown of Property Tax:

Personal and Real Property Tax Required for Non-Bond Purposes	\$	657,735.45
Personal and Real Property Tax Required for Bonds	\$	68,500.00

NOTICE OF SPECIAL HEARING TO SET FINAL TAX REQUEST

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given, in compliance with the provisions of State Statute Section 77-1632, that the governing body will meet on the 21st day of September 2023, at 7:00 o'clock P.M., at Milford City Hall for the purpose of hearing support, opposition, criticism, suggestions or observations of taxpayers relating to setting the final tax request.

	2022	2023	Change
Operating Budget	10,145,423.00	10,049,897.00	-1%
Property Tax Request	\$ 621,922.65	\$ 726,235.45	17%
Valuation	128,968,021	150,654,932	17%
Tax Rate	0.482230	0.482052	0%
Tax Rate if Prior Tax Request was at Current Valuation	0.412813		

MT — September 13, 2023
ZNEZ

NOTICE OF JOINT PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED PROPERTY TAX INCREASES

Public notice is hereby given, in compliance with the provisions of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 77-1633, that a representative of the following political subdivisions will meet on the 20th day of September 2023 at 7:00 p.m., at the Seward Civic Center Auditorium, 616 Bradford, Seward, NE 68434 for the purpose of conducting a joint public hearing to obtain public input on property tax increases proposed by the following subdivisions:

Seward County, phone (402) 643-2883, property tax requested: \$ 10,549,339
Southeast Community College, phone (402) 323-3401, property tax requested: \$ 83,078,523.
Milford School District, phone (402) 761-3321, property tax requested: \$ 7,523,668
City of Seward, phone (402) 643-2928, property tax requested: \$ 2,006,456.70
City of Milford, phone (402) 761-3247, property tax requested: \$ 726,235
Crete Public School, (402) 826-5855, property tax requested: \$ 14,079,924
David City Public School, phone (402) 367- 4590, property tax requested: \$ 11,704,783
East Butler Public School, phone (402) 545-2081, property tax requested: \$ 7,472,439

Said meeting is open to the public. Accommodations for the disabled are available upon request. Please contact the Seward County Clerk’s Office at (402) 643-2883 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting if accommodations are required.

There is no item on the agenda for this joint public meeting other than discussion of each political subdivision’s intent to increase its property tax request by a percentage greater than the “allowable growth percentage” defined in § 77-1633. The political subdivisions shall make their presentations in the order listed above.

Sherry Schweitzer, County Clerk

SCI/MT — September 13, 2023
ZNEZ

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GUN SHOW: September 22-24 Westfair, Council Bluffs, IA Fri 3-8pm, Sat. 9am-5pm, Sun. 9am-3pm. \$10 for all weekend (under 14 FREE) . More info: 563-608-4401 www.marvkrauspromotions.net

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Online: milfordtimes.net • In person: 129 S. 6th St., Seward, NE

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FOR ALL PUBLICATIONS

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change on
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CONNECTION

Help Wanted

PARTS ASSISTANT POSITION. Full-time employment with benefits. Job description includes: Parts receiving and billing, shipping, repair scheduling, stocking of merchandise, inventory management, and working with customers. Contact us for an application. Nick's Farm Store, 1030 N. 13th St., Geneva, 402-759-3217.

COUNTER PARTS POSITION. Full-time employment with benefits. Job description includes: Working the parts counter for farm and outdoor power equipment, writing work orders, and sales of outdoor power equipment. Please contact us for an application. Nick's Farm Store, 1030 N. 13th St., Geneva, 402-759-3217.

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Memorial Health Care Systems
WE ARE RECRUITING FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS:

Community Relations Director: Full-Time Day Position. Candidate responsible for overseeing operations of Administration Department while providing direct support to CEO. Develop and oversee plans and policies related to customer service, community outreach programs and public relations. Responsible for all corporate image matters including advertising, press releases, website, social media and other communications. A candidate with a Bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university with an emphasis in marketing or public relations with three years of related experience preferred. Health Care experience preferred. - *Memorial Hospital*

RN - Days & Nights: Full-Time, Part-Time & PRN Day and Night Positions, Day Shift 5 a.m.-5 p.m., Night Shift 5 p.m.-5 a.m. Acute Care, ER and OB experience preferred. Flexible scheduling includes every third weekend with holiday rotation. RN licensure and ACLS required. Position includes night shift retention bonus. - *Memorial Hospital*

Dietary Supervisor: Full-Time Day position including some evenings, weekends and holidays as needed. Supervise and manage daily operations of the nutritional services department providing leadership and guidance to ensure that food quality and safety standards are met. Certified Dietary Manager preferred, but not required. Prior experience in healthcare foodservice preferred. - *Memorial Hospital*

Nutritional Services Aide: Part-Time Day position. Seeking responsible, motivated, dependable individual. The right candidate will be trained in multi positions and tasks in the department. Candidate must be at least 16 years of age. Candidate must be able to multi-task and exhibit excellent customer service skills. Daytime hours to include rotating weekends and holidays. - *Memorial Hospital*

Support Services Technician: Full-Time Day Position working Housekeeping and Laundry, 6:30 am - 3:00 pm week with every third Weekend. Candidate will be a part of the holiday rotation. Seeking dependable, motivated person with an eye for detail. Experience preferred but will train the right candidate. - *Memorial Hospital*

RN/LPN: Full-Time RN/LPN Day Nurse position available, Monday - Friday with Saturday rotation. This position requires good communications skills between you and the provider. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are essential to providing excellent customer service and communicating with patients. Computer skills are required. Previous Clinic Nursing experience preferred. Current RN/LPN licensure required. - *Seward Family Medical Center*

Clinic Nurse Manager: Full-Time Day position. Candidate supervises all Memorial Family Medical Center nursing personnel and manages all nursing functions. Additional duties include: coordination with other departments and agencies, patient care management, regulatory compliance including, but not limited to, OSHA, CMS Rural Health Clinic, working in a direct care role. Actively involved in development and implementation of Population Management programs, clinic resource for Electronic Medical Record and is Employee Health nurse for MHCS. Two years supervisory experience and NE RN license required; two years medical practice experience preferred. - *Seward Family Medical Center*

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- Respiratory Therapist
- RN - Nights
- Child Care Teacher Aide

For immediate consideration, complete an application at or send your resume to:
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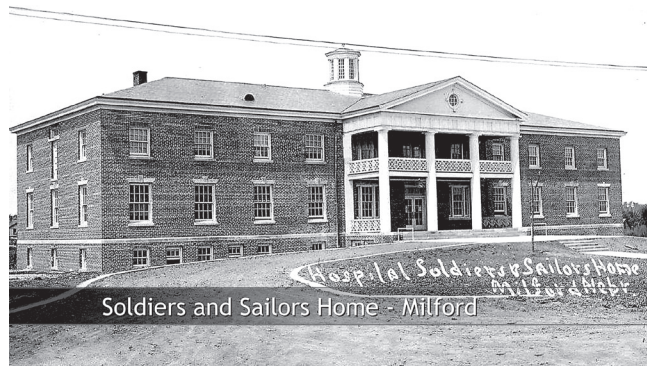
Memorial Health Care Systems

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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, family status, or national origin, or an intention, to make such preference, limitation or discrimination." Family status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians; pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18.

The Milford Times will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination call HUD toll-free at 1-800-642-6112. <http://www.nol.org/home/NEOC>.

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COURTESY PHOTO

The Nebraska Soldiers and Sailors Home hospital stands on what is now the Southeast Community College Campus in Milford. The hospital was renovated into Nebraska Hall, the oldest existing building on campus. Ron Petsch will present a video on the history of the SCC campus Friday, Sept. 22, at noon at Pizza Kitchen. All are invited to attend.

Petsch to showcase SCC campus history

BY EMILY HEMPHILL
emily@sewardindependent.com

The Milford campus of Southeast Community College carries a rich and storied history. Ron Petsch, a longtime educator at SCC and local historian, will present the "History of the Milford Campus," a 27-minute video he created, at the Friday, Sept. 22, Milford Kiwanis Club meeting. The meeting begins at noon in the back room of Pizza Kitchen. All are invited to attend, with lunch available for purchase. The video, narrated by Mike Meyer, showcases the history of the campus back to the late 1800s. "I have truly been excited and enthusiastic about the history of the campus for years," Petsch said. Though the 50-acre campus has been part of SCC for 50 years, the history of the land and buildings goes back even further to its days as the Nebraska State Trade School, opened in 1941, and further than that, when it served as the site of the Nebraska Soldiers and Sailors Home, built in 1889. "The campus has had a very unique beginning and history," Petsch said, "and I presume that many Milford folks don't know everything about how the campus came about."



MHS celebrates Good Ol' Days

BY STEPHANIE CROSTON
scroston@sewardindependent.com

Milford High will celebrate "The Good Ol' Days" with homecoming this week. The week will end with Milford hosting Kearney Catholic in football Friday, Sept. 15. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m. The coronation of the king and queen will take place right after the game. The Eagles are encouraged to participate in this year's dress-up days, as well. Themes are:
Monday - movie characters from childhood
Tuesday - generations (freshmen - babies/children; sophomores - college; juniors - parents; seniors - old people)
Wednesday - anything but a bag
Thursday - rhyme without reason (find a partner and dress like items that rhyme, for example, house and mouse)
Friday - purple and white
On Wednesday, Sept.

13, the Eagles will host their annual pancake feed starting at 7:20 a.m. Pancakes and sausages will be served all seventh through 12th grade students and staff. On Friday, Sept. 15, the Eagle Olympics will start at 12:55 p.m. The pep rally will be at the end of the day.

Pink postcards signal property tax hearing

BY EMILY HEMPHILL
emily@sewardindependent.com

Property owners should see pink postcards popping up in their mailboxes this week. The postcards are to notify residents of a joint public tax hearing at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 20, at the Seward Civic Center, at which four local taxing entities will present their proposed budgets for the 2023-24 fiscal year. The Civic Center is at 616 Bradford Street in Seward, and the hearing will be held in the auditorium. Seward County, Milford Public Schools, the City of Seward and the City of Milford are all required to present their proposed budgets at the hearing. The Nebraska Legislature first enacted the requirement last year through LB 644, the Property Tax Request Act (passed in 2021), intended to increase

transparency for political subdivisions looking to raise their property tax levies. The act requires a colored postcard be mailed to all property owners in an area where a taxing entity intends to raise its levy more than its 2% allowable growth over the previous year. Southeast Community College and the public school districts of Crete, David City and East Butler also will be required to share their proposed budgets at a joint public meeting. Those districts overlap with portions of Seward County, but they will present their budgets in Lancaster, Saline and Butler counties, respectively, where their districts are headquartered. Seward and Centennial Public Schools, as well as others that overlap with Seward County, will not have to participate in the meeting as their tax askings do not meet the 2% threshold.

As required by law, each postcard will include details specific to each parcel of a property owner's land, including its assessed valuation and how the levy increase from each entity will affect the property

owner's tax obligation. The joint hearing is a chance for the public to ask questions of each entity, though each is already required by law to hold its own budget and tax request hearings individually.

PROPERTY TAX REQUESTS 2023-24

SEWARD COUNTY	\$10,549,339
SOUTHEAST CC	\$83,078,523
MILFORD SCHOOLS	\$7,523,668
CITY OF SEWARD	\$2,006,456
CITY OF MILFORD	\$726,235

Source: Seward County Clerk's Office

Clearing up Confusion

The first joint public tax hearing held in 2022 created confusion for many residents who received the pink postcards. Here are answers to some common questions.

- WHY DID I RECEIVE A POSTCARD?

Postcards were mailed to all property owners in Seward County. That means one or more taxing entities whose district contains your property is planning to raise its levy, which could affect the amount of property taxes you pay.
- WHY DID I RECEIVE MULTIPLE POSTCARDS?

Property owners receive a separate postcard for every parcel of property owned. If you own property in multiple counties, you may receive postcards from each county.
- DON'T SCHOOLS, CITIES AND THE COUNTY ALREADY HOLD THEIR OWN HEARINGS?

Yes. The Nebraska Uniform Budget Act, passed in 1969, requires entities utilizing public funds to hold a budget hearing before adopting their budget. The public may speak during these hearings, though members of the public rarely attend. The intent of the joint public tax hearing, dubbed the "Truth in Taxation" bill, was to raise additional awareness of the public's opportunity to speak, but the public has had that opportunity for decades. Last year, only about 50 people attended the joint hearing - less than half a percent of the county's population.
- IS THE POSTCARD A BILL I HAVE TO PAY NOW?

No. The postcard states the proposed amount of property tax you will pay to each taxing entity and the difference in that amount from the previous year. You do not need to send payment to the school, county or city, just pay your property taxes as usual.
- WHAT IF I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

Contact the County Clerk's Office at (402) 643-2883 or the County Assessor's Office at (402) 643-3311.

Milford names Homecoming candidates



COURTESY PHOTO

Milford Public Schools will celebrate Homecoming Week Sept. 11-15. Seniors selected to homecoming court by the student body include, from left: (front row) Sarah Spahr, Madison Roth, Paige Riley, Macy Stutzman and Jaidyn Bell; and (back row) Gavin Dunlap, Reice Stutzman, Conner Kohout, Keenan Troyer and Hunter Oborny. Coronation of the king and queen will follow the football game on Friday, Sept. 15.

Happy homecoming, Eagles!

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