

Area News Digest

Written by Gothenburg Times
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Taken from the news columns of area newspapers.

Lex board ponders religious issue

COZAD—Accommodating desires for religious expression during school time, but apart from school property, is under consideration by the Lexington Board of Education. Superintendent Chessmore present policy 12.5.1 “Release Time for Expression of Strongly Held Religious Beliefs” during a recent board meeting. A very specific religious group’s request is what led to the discussions, requesting release time to pray during the school day.—reported in the Tri-City Trib.

Bow man arrested after attempted stabbing

BROKEN BOW—A Broken Bow man was arrested recently after allegedly attempting to stab another man during a fight. According to Police Chief Steve Scott, officers responded to a call and found Ralph Willis III struggling with a man who was trying to get the knife away from him. The 38-year-old Willis was transported to Jennie Melham Memorial Medical Center with knife wounds to his hands. Willis was then booked into the Custer County Jail on various charges including terroristic threats, use of a weapon and domestic assault.—reported in the Custer County Chief.

Bills being sent for fire and rescue services

OGALLALA—A local resident was thankful to members of the Ogallala Volunteer Fire Department and their commitment for efforts in fighting not one but two houses he owns. However, he was shocked to receive a \$5,825 bill for services rendered by the department for the first fire, not receiving the bill for the second fire as yet. Upon receiving the bill, he was

instructed to turn it in to his insurance company and the department would accept whatever they paid. The insurance company remarked it was the first time they had received a bill from a fire department. Apparently, in September of 2009, a resolution went into effect at Ogallala as a fee schedule to charge for each response vehicle as well as supplies, hourly rates for equipment and more. Discussions are now including varying insurance coverages and the fact that taxpayers already pay to finance the fire districts.—reported in the Keith County News.

NCTA assistant dean submits resignation

CURTIS—Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) Assistant Dean Rick Mestas, resigned his position effective Jan. 7. According to NCTA Dean Dr. Weldon Sleight, a search committee has been formed to find a replacement as soon as possible. Mestas took the position in the fall of 2009, coming from Washington, DC where he worked in the defense intelligence agency as a program manager. He decided to return to that position. Officials hoped to have a replacement hired by July as the position is responsible for the day-to-day operations of NCTA including student services and housing.—reported in the Frontier County Enterprise.

Sandhills Byway water seen in upcoming film

ARNOLD—The Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway couldn't have asked for a bigger stage in which to advertise than a role in a movie. It began with a stop at the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway booth at the state fair where a complimentary bottle of water labeled for the Byway was experienced by a movie-maker and author of the award winning novel, *The Boarder*. The movie being filmed is based on her book and features the bottles of water with the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway labels. The movie is expected to be released in March or early April.—reported in the Arnold Sentinel.

MPCC president visits Callaway

CALLAWAY—Mid-Plains Community College of North Platte came to Callaway recently. MPCC president Dr. Michael Chipps and other officials dropped by Callaway Public School to meet the superintendent and guidance counselor. Chipps and his entourage are in the midst of a tour of 35 school districts within MPCC's 2,500 mile range of influence. The purpose is to renew contacts and to hear points of view on the community colleges' services with a goal of making

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the transition from high school to college as seamless as possible as well as exposing students to potential career fields.—reported in the Callaway Courier.