CHRISTY LECHER CHRIS LECHER ANNE OSTENDORF

Boxes of books for her fifth- and sixth-grade classes are stored in her husband's high school science classroom.

Christy Lecher will not only teach in a new school system when school starts, she may not even have a permanent classroom.

Workers from Paulsen Inc. of Cozad are trying to finish a remodel project of the fifth- and sixth-grade classroom pods and media center at Dudley Elementary and adding a conference room and testing areas—all before school begins on Aug. 18.

Christy will be adjusting to that as well as learning about a new school system, getting used to the procedures and learning the names of students and people in the community.

A graduate of Chadron State College with a degree in elementary education in 1993, Christy most recently was a para educator and in-school suspension support teacher at Chadron Middle School.

Before that, she helped husband Chris—who will teach high school science classes—in his job as a funeral director and also taught physical education and sixth grade in Grants, NM.

During that time, they lived in Minnesota, North Dakota, New Mexico and Colorado until Chris returned to CSC to finish an education degree which he received in May.

“We looked into different places and wanted to raise our girls in a small-town atmosphere,” Christy said. “We looked for a place where we could both could get jobs because we’re ready to dig into our roots, stay settled and raise our family.”

Before deciding to take jobs in Gothenburg, both Christy and Chris said they had heard good things about Gothenburg and the school system.

When not working, she enjoys the activities of the couple’s two daughters—Keely, 11; and Ashley, 6;—such as swimming and dancing and attending school activities.

Christy, a 1989 graduate of Lingle/Ft. Laramie High School in Wyoming, will teach sixth grade science and core classes in fifth grade.

Chris, a 1987 Crawford High School graduate, was hired to teach chemistry, physics and physical science and coach junior high basketball.

While initially at CSC, he started down two educational paths—mortuary science and education—before deciding to become a mortician and moving to Louisville, KY, for school where he graduated in 1995.

Because of the time the job took away from raising the couple’s children, Chris decided to finish his educational degree.

“I also liked working with kids as I’d been a volunteer coach for city rec leagues,” he said.

The biggest challenge he said he faces in his first teaching job is keeping up with technology.

“Kids need to be prepared for when they leave Gothenburg so it’s good to give kids exposure to technology,” Chris explained. “It’s always changing.”

Anne Ostendorf is not new to Gothenburg or the District 20 school system.

The 1992 graduate of Davenport High School taught preschool at Building Blocks Childcare Center and Preschool for nine years and later substitute taught in Gothenburg and area schools.

Last year, she taught first grade at Morton Grade School in Lexington.

Ostendorf received a degree in early childhood education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1997 and earned a teaching certificate and endorsement in early childhood unified (focused on children from birth through third grade with special needs) in 2004 from the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

She said she’s always liked the Gothenburg school system where she’s student and substitute taught.

“I’m impressed with it and how progressive it is and I liked the staff,” Ostendorf said.

Ostendorf entered the teaching field because she enjoys being around and teaching children.

While at Morton school, she said she was challenged with the large number of English Language Learners and their parents who couldn’t speak English.

“It was difficult communicating with the parents but they and their children were so thankful for everything they received,” Ostendorf said.

Because ELL students learn and process in their first language, she said she had to figure out how to teach them in ways that were easiest for them to learn.

Ostendorf and her husband Eric ranch 20 miles north of Gothenburg. They have two daughters: Sidnee, 9; and Devyn, 8.

She enjoys spending time with Eric and their girls and helping at the ranch.

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