

May time fly by for you, yours

Doesn't it seem like we just celebrated Thanksgiving? It's a question I hear a lot. It's a question I ask a lot. It seems as if it is always Monday or Friday or the first of the month. Wasn't it just a short time ago when we were filling up our bathtubs with fresh water so we would be sure to have an adequate supply to drink when we turned the calendar over to 2000? Three years have passed since we wondered how we were going to deal with saying '00 instead of the familiar '99.

While I complain about the time going by so fast, it's one of the things for which I'm thankful. I can't imagine living a life where time passes by at a snail's pace. We all have our moments when time passes by slowly, but usually it's because we are anticipating something exciting that's about to happen, like seeing an old friend or going on vacation.

My time goes fast because I'm able to do the things I enjoy and that makes me grateful. I'm around people who share my interests and my values. I have children and grandchildren who I love and enjoy being with.

It's all the good things in life that make time go fast. It's when you are having a great time that the day is over in a flash. It's when you are sharing dinner with good friends that the hands of the clock spin like a twirling top. It's visiting on the phone with a daughter hundreds of miles away when you suddenly discover an hour has passed. It's attending a wonderful concert that makes time fly by.

Where has the time gone? It's the person who has a lot to be thankful for who is asking that question. May it be you.
Happy Thanksgiving.



Joyce Ore

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Local

BEDROOM FIRE

Candle wax caused a fire in a Hastings bedroom Thursday.

The Hastings Fire Department responded to a call of a fire at 227 E. Seventh St. at 11:20 p.m. Firefighters were met by the homeowner, Steven Hylden, who told them he had put out the fire using a fire extinguisher.

It was determined that burning candle wax on a dresser near the floor was the cause of the fire. Firefighters removed the smoke.

There was minor damage to the residence, according to the HFD report.

PROBATION VIOLATION

A Hastings man was sentenced Nov. 6 to 60 days in jail for violating his probation.

Adams County District Judge Stephen Illingworth sentenced John J. Larue, age unknown, of 1018 W. Seventh St.

Larue admitted on Oct. 31 to violating his probation several times between Nov. 29, 1999, and Feb. 25, 2001.

He originally was sentenced Nov. 8, 1999, to two years' probation for second-degree forgery.

Second-degree forgery, when the amount is more than \$75 but less than \$300, is a Class 4 felony punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

BOOKMOBILE

MONDAY

- ◆ Kenesaw School, 9 a.m. to 12:50 p.m.
- ◆ Haven Home Day Care, 1-1:30 p.m.
- ◆ Kenesaw Main Street, 1:30-2 p.m.
- ◆ Homestead, 2:30-3 p.m.
- ◆ Kensington, 3:15 p.m.

TUESDAY

- ◆ Holstein School, 9:15-10 a.m.
- ◆ Silver Lake Elementary (Bladen), 10:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.
- ◆ Silver Lake High (Roseland), 2:35-3 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

- ◆ District 75, 9:15-9:45 a.m.
- ◆ Ayr School, 10:15-11:30 a.m.
- ◆ District 33, 1:15-2 p.m.

THURSDAY

- ◆ District 87 (Christ Lutheran), 9:15-10:30 a.m.
- ◆ District 29, 10:45-11:15 a.m.
- ◆ Kim Gibson's Day Care, 12:30 p.m.
- ◆ Juniata School, 1-3 p.m.

FRIDAY

- ◆ District 15, 9:10-40 a.m.
- ◆ Pooh Corner College, 10:50-11:15 a.m.

Calendar

HASTINGS

◆ St. Cecilia's Bazaar and Chicken Noodle Dinner, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, St. Cecilia High School gym.

LAWRENCE

◆ St. Stephen's Catholic Church Thanksgiving supper, raffle and bake sale, 4-7 p.m. Sunday, St. Stephen's School.

Lotteries

WINNING NUMBERS

Friday
Nebraska Pick 5 5-9-35-36-37
Jackpot: \$72,000

Report: HHS should treat employees better

SCOTT BAUER
The Associated Press

LINCOLN — The state's largest agency charged with providing health and human services to Nebraskans needs to become kinder and gentler to its own employees, according to a report released Friday by Gov. Mike Johanns.

The independent advisory panel report generally casts a favorable look at the state Health and Human Services System, but recommends that more be done to improve the morale of the more than 6,000 employees of the agency.

"The agency should turn inward

to provide a caring, engaging, positive culture for its own staff, regardless of the external environment," the report said.

In a letter of response to the report's findings sent to Johanns, leaders of the health agency said they agreed that supporting employees was important. Many of the recommendations were well-received, the letter to Johanns said.

The study found that an outdated employee survey showed the work environment was not favorable and little action, feedback, or training has been done to change that.

Among the report's recommenda-

tions was creation of a team-building and conflict management skills program.

It also suggested that a new assessment of the workplace be conducted to measure attitude and engagement of employees. Such surveys should be done twice a year until scores increase to a level of excellence, the report said.

No data was found showing the satisfaction of the people the agency serves or the attitude of health care suppliers, and it would be helpful to know their attitudes as well, the study said.

The environment that currently exists between the agency and out-

side providers does not seem as healthy as it could or should be, the report said.

"A lack of adequate communication and interaction between leaders and other associates within (the agency) has resulted in a staff not fully enthused or engaged," the report said.

It recommended that one person be in charge of the entire agency, instead of having a policy cabinet of people in charge of different parts of the system.

Johanns said he was confident that many of the recommendations of the review panel would be adopted by HHS.



GORDON R. TUSTIN/AP

Sagebrush Products, a wood engraving business in Sidney, is shown Friday after a Thursday night fire spread to a stockpile of oxygen tanks in a neighboring store, causing explosions that destroyed both businesses and damaged several other businesses.

Explosions rock Sidney

The Associated Press

SIDNEY — Two downtown businesses were destroyed early Friday when a fire reached a stockpile of more than 700 oxygen tanks that exploded under the heat and were hurled through walls and windows.

No one was seriously injured. One volunteer firefighter was hospitalized after he had trouble breathing while fighting the fire.

The cause of the fire had not been determined Friday, City Manager Gary Person said.

Sagebrush Products, a wood engraving business, and Apria Health Care were destroyed in the fire and explosions. Doors and windows to several other businesses were shattered by the explosions or flying debris.

"It was like the grand finale of a Fourth of July fireworks display," Person said. "You could hear it all over town. It shook the ground. It shook windows. It spread debris for a 20-block area."

The oxygen tanks that had been stored at Apria, a medical supply store, exploded in the fire, Person said.

Once the fire reached the tanks, they all exploded within three minutes, Person said after watching a video of the explosion.

"We really, really thought at that time we were going to lose downtown," he said. "It was just one explosion after another."

One oxygen tank was found lodged in the windshield of a van nearly five blocks away, Person said.

The fire was about a block from western Nebraska town's main intersection, including U.S. Highway 30. Traffic was being diverted from the area Friday.

A passerby spotted smoke coming out of Sagebrush Products just after midnight and called firefighters. Person said the fire then spread to the Apria Health Care and ignited oxygen tanks stored there.

The explosions started at 12:54 a.m. MST, Person said.

Directly across the street, the door to A Head of Time beauty shop was blown off.

"We're sitting here looking at (the destroyed businesses). It's just a shell that's left, and it's still smoking," Eileen Thompson, a receptionist at the beauty shop, said late Friday morning.

Chancellor: Ag programs will take share of UNL cuts

ANDY RAUN
Hastings Tribune

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources will continue to take its share of cuts if UNL's financial problems worsen, Chancellor Harvey Perlman said this week.

IANR, which offers ag, natural resources, and family and consumer sciences programs at UNL, is being hit to the tune of \$2 million in the most recent round of UNL budget cuts.

That represents 27 percent of the \$7.5 million total Perlman was ordered to cut from his budget following action by the Nebraska Legislature in August.

In all, the University of Nebraska system was cut by \$15.3 million. The cuts are tied to severe shortfalls in state revenues, and are expected to be followed by more in the months to come.

At a Wednesday news conference, Perlman was asked if he could continue to adhere to the principle of proportionality if or when additional budget cuts were required.

"Yes," he replied.

RURAL CUTS

University outposts took heavy hits in this round of IANR

reductions.

The largest, in terms of dollars and cents, was Perlman's decision to eliminate the South Central Research & Extension Center in western Clay County, for estimated savings of \$661,707.

The center focuses mainly on irrigated cropping systems. The research farm associated with it is to remain in operation.

Perlman said IANR would seek ways to take up the slack in south central Nebraska through means such as telephone conference calls and the Internet.

Another high-profile hit was elimination of the West Central Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, located at the West Central Research & Extension Center at North Platte, and reassignment of the lab's diagnostic and extension veterinarian. The move was designed to save \$211,370.

A similar lab with veterinarian at Scottsbluff was eliminated earlier this year in a previous round of budget cuts.

The move will leave only one vet diagnostic lab in the UNL system — at Lincoln. Perlman said that lab would be upgraded to serve the entire state.

He also said a new extension veterinarian would be hired and posted somewhere in western

Nebraska to help fill the educational void.

Other outreach-related IANR cuts include elimination of administrative funding for College Park in Grand Island and learning centers in North Platte and Lincoln, for a total of \$104,863.

Perlman's decision to shut down the South Central R&E Center, leaving only the research farm there, and to shut down the North Platte vet lab both ran counter to recommendations from UNL's Academic Planning Committee.

After conducting public hearings on both proposed cuts, the APC recommended that South Central be left open with a reduced level of staffing and that the North Platte lab and veterinarian be left in place.

LAND-GRANT CONCERNS

According to statistics compiled by Charles Stonecipher of Hastings, retired director of SCREC, 42 percent of the cuts in this round of budget reductions are coming from IANR operations located off Lincoln's East Campus. That's out of proportion to the 25 percent of the IANR budget accounted for by the off-campus operations.

Please see CUTS/page A7

Feedlot proposal to get new hearing

LENGTHY HEARING RULED DEFICIENT; NOTIFICATION PROBLEMS TO BLAME

Hastings Tribune

MINDEN — Monday's public hearing before the Kearney County Joint Planning and Zoning Commission on plans for a new feedlot near Norman has been found legally deficient, so another hearing will be conducted.

Monday's hearing drew about 70 people to the Kearney County Fairgrounds in Minden and went on for more than three hours. It involved an application by KCC Feeders for a special use permit to build a feedlot two miles northeast of Norman.

At the end of the evening, commissioners tabled action and scheduled a special meeting for this coming Monday for a vote on the application. That meeting now has been canceled.

Kathy Russell, Kearney County zoning administrator, said the first hearing had been deficient in that all landowners within one mile had not been properly notified.

As a result, a new hearing is necessary. It will be conducted at 7 p.m. Dec. 9, again on the Kearney County Fairgrounds.

The application then will go before the County Board of Supervisors for another public hearing at 1 p.m. Dec. 17. That hearing will be conducted in the assembly room at the county courthouse in Minden.

KCC Feeders involves John Wubbenhorst Sr. of Minden and members of his family. They propose to build a feedlot that can hold at least 5,000 cattle.

The property in question, which is owned by Wubbenhorst's sons, John Jr. and Russ, is located on Sand Creek, a tributary of the Little Blue River. The Wubbenhorsts already are keeping some cattle there.

Because of its sandy soil profile, the property is considered environmentally sensitive and is part of an RC rural conservation district as defined in Kearney County's 2001 zoning code. Livestock confinements are allowed in the RC district with a special use permit.

At Monday's hearing, numerous area residents and landowners turned out to speak against the KCC application. Concerns they cited included dust, odor, flies, traffic, and the possibility of ground and surface water contamination, disease and reductions in neighboring property values.

Man arrested on meth charge

Hastings Tribune

A 34-year-old rural Glenvil man was arrested at his home Thursday for conspiring to distribute methamphetamine.

James Malone was indicted on federal charges of conspiring to distribute more than 500 grams of methamphetamine between Sept. 1 and Nov. 18, according to a press release from U.S. Attorney Mike Heavican.

Malone was arrested at his home by the Tri-City HIDTA Drug Task Force — a team of officers from local sheriff's offices and city police departments from Central Nebraska — and the FBI.

The arrest took place without incident. "I'm just glad nobody got hurt when he was arrested," Clay County Sheriff Jeff Franklin said. "Whenever organizations work together to get things done it's great."

The Adams County Sheriff's Office, Clay County Sheriff's Office and Nebraska State Patrol have been working on this investigation for about two years, Franklin said.

Evidence collected by various police divisions led to the arrest, he said.

Malone will be federally indicted in U.S. District Court in Lincoln at an unknown date, Heavican said.

If convicted, Malone faces 13 years to life in a federal institution.

He is currently being held in the Clay County Jail.