



SUNDAY

THE NORTH PLATTE TELEGRAPH

Pulled back

Nebraska struggles as Illinois blows out the Huskers at home. **SPORTS, PAGE B1**

NOVEMBER 22, 2020

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Prairie Arts Center hosts its annual Festival of Trees



Todd von Kampen / The North Platte Telegraph

Demea Brown, 8, of North Platte (foreground) and her brothers Levi, 5, and Callen, 11, look at one of the decorated Christmas trees with grandmother Betty Frederick of rural Hershey Saturday at the Prairie Arts Center's annual Festival of Trees.

'One-of-a-kind' celebration

By **TODD VON KAMPEN**
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Being immortal, Santa Claus' social distancing Saturday at North Platte's Prairie Arts Center was naturally more for the sake of his

young guests. Granted, 14-year-old Coy Baker of North Platte and his 12-year-old brother, Kason, wouldn't have been sitting on Santa's lap anyway as they visited by appointment during

the annual Festival of Trees. "What would you like for Christmas?" Santa asked after checking his 21st-century phone app to determine whether the brothers had been

Please see **TREES**, Page A2

Health official urges masks, caution as risk dial increases

WCDHD director: 'Paying attention' to 'mitigation strategies is critical' now

By **SUSAN SZUCH**
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A week ago, the West Central District Health Department's COVID-19 Risk Dial moved into the red — severe — category for the first time since its implementation.

This week, it moved further into the red as the risk factors gave an average score of 3.77 out of 4.0.

What happens if the community exceeds that threshold?

"There are states that have moved into purple, like they had to add another color, and that's really scary. I hope (we don't have to go to purple, but) we're aware that if we get to the end of that road, we got to look at what we do," said Shannon Vanderheiden, executive director of WCDHD. "How do we add on other variables, and now what are we measuring? Once we get to the end of the dial, it means everything is maxed out. We have no room, and we have no resources."

The risk dial does not give a prediction of what is to come. It's meant to give an assessment based on current data, to warn public health officials when to pump the brakes before a community reaches a severe state.

"Looking at (this dial) and then trying to make a change is like looking at the house is burnt down, and we're going to put out the fire after the house burns," Vanderheiden said. "So really paying attention to the importance of the mitigation strategies is critical. We could stop right now —

Please see **RED**, Page A2

No Pasta for Pantries in 2020, but Kiwanis raises, distributes funds in a different way

By **JOB VIGIL**
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The North Platte Kiwanis canceled the annual Pasta for the Pantries due to COVID-19, but through the work of the members, funds were raised and distributed.

The event raises money for the four local food pantries — North Platte High School, the Salvation Army, North Platte Catholic Community Food Pantry and Grace Ministries.

Kiwanis President Dave Leggott and member Adam Otte presented checks to the

pantries. Kiwanis member Betty Sones said the club donated \$750 to the NPFS Food Pantry and \$1,000 each to the other three organizations.

"With generous donations from local businesses, McDonald's and individuals, we were able to give money to help our four local pantries," the Kiwanis said in a press release. "Due to high demand, they are in need of food and financial help."

The original Swing for the Pantries began in the early

1990s and included a golf tournament at Indian Meadows Golf club. Sponsorships were sold for \$50 for each of the holes.

The Pasta for the Pantries event has been held at First Presbyterian Church since the changeover from the original golf tournament. Sones and Ron Rankin have been co-chairs of the event since its inception.

"The North Platte Kiwanis members are a tremendous help in assisting in this also," Sones said.



Courtesy photo

North Platte Kiwanis President Dave Leggott and club member Adam Otte present a check to Brandy Buscher and Jaylee Shaner for the North Platte High School food pantry. The annual Pasta for the Pantries fundraiser was canceled due to COVID-19, but donations allowed the club to assist the four local food pantries nonetheless.

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HIGH: 52 LOW: 28
Sunny today, then partly cloudy in the evening. Find our full five-day forecast on page B4.

INSIDE Comics **B3**
Opinion..... **A4** Lifestyles .. **C2-3,5-6**
Record..... **A5** Youth **C4**
Ag/Business **A6** Classifieds **C6-8**

LOTTERY
Pick5: 4-13-17-21-37
2-by-2: R 1-8, W 19-25
Powerball:
51-54-57-60-69 11

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