

## Buckin' broncos

Crawford rodeo has big crowds, action **PAGE B1**



## Merging past, present

Oldest bank in Chadron gets new name

**PAGE A5**

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# Sutherland gives high praise to Chadron

New manager looks to continue cooperative work

**MARK DYKES**  
Record Staff

It's officially been a month since Chadron's new city manager, John Sutherland, started in the position, and in that time he's been familiarizing himself with city staff.

"This is still a learning phase for me," Sutherland said. "The most difficult thing for a new guy to come into a situation, is to get his arms around exactly what's working and how it's working before jumping to any conclusions. I'm certainly not going to jump into anything. I'm going to ask a

lot of questions, get a lot of input from a lot of different people, and try to understand the community, the workforce and how the city operates. This is a huge learning opportunity."

Among the highlights of his first month, Sutherland said he's impressed with the efficiency and commitment of the city staff, and the willingness to work together across normal lines to get tasks done. "It's very focused on the end result, very focused on delivering a good product at the end." He further added this wasn't a surprise, as Chadron presents itself well as a clean, friendly and obviously thriving town.

"Even though it's a remote, rural, agricultural community that you would think would be

suffering a bit, it doesn't seem to be the truth in this case. People dedicated themselves to doing a good job, doing good work and working well together."

His experience in other locations, he said, is when everyone shares ideas, focus and sense of direction, those are the keys to success. "Remember that we're all working for the same positive result for the city in the long run. We're all in this together, trying to make success."

Having been in a more urbanized area prior to coming to Chadron, as he came to Chadron from Rapid City, Sutherland explained he and his wife, Connie Martin, didn't live in the city itself but in one of the communities about 15 miles outside. It wasn't a big change in that sense,

coming to Chadron, he said, jokingly adding that coming to Chadron is more of a move from the country to the city.

The couple has been living in Chadron, and recently found a home they intend to purchase. "We're planning to make this our permanent location. We moved to the big city," Sutherland hasn't been commuting from South Dakota, he pointed out, living in Chadron since mid-May. They have driven back and forth in the moving process.

Sutherland and Martin have four children between them, as well as nine grandchildren and several great-grandchildren

This will be the first Fur Trade Days for the couple, and they're looking forward to it.

Looking at the long-term,

Sutherland hasn't yet selected a specific project but understands the city has some water storage and distribution issues he'd like to prioritize, as well as some street paving issues. Such issues, he said, are not unusual, and he also wants to look at the areas of transportation and safety. "Those become areas of very high importance to me. We want to deliver a good product to our citizens."

Another item of importance for him is presenting a balanced budget, and he and staff are deep into the budget discussions.

"I plan on being here for the long haul," Sutherland said of his time in Chadron. "As long as I'm on the green side of the grass." He further added, "Chadron's got a good spirit to it. It's a pleasure to be part of the community."



**MARK DYKES**

Plenty of work is going into one of the main buildings at the Dawes County Fairgrounds, including a new fan and lights, and updated restrooms, the framework of which can be seen in the far corner.

# Fair features additions to events and building

**MARK DYKES**

With the annual Dawes County Fair starting at the end of the month, folks can expect to see some new things at the fairgrounds, particularly with the event center. With a grant through the LB 840 optional half-cent sales tax, the building received a new addition. There are also some interior updates including new lighting and a large fan for improved ventilation.

Dawes County Ag Society members Dan Rhembrandt, Crystal Brunsch, Neal Soester and Brooke Keim recently pro-

vided a look inside the building. On top of the new lighting and fans, the most noticeable difference in the event center will be the new, ADA-compliant restrooms at the northwest corner. Accessible from both inside and outside, the restrooms are and update from facilities that were about 60 years old.

There will also be new sidewalks connecting buildings along the south side, and replacement of broken sidewalks on the north end.

Brunsch noted there is always maintenance happening at the grounds, and they will continue

upkeep as they always have. The Ag Society members expressed their appreciation to the local businesses and contractors for helping with the project, but noted there are always things to do at the grounds. Anyone who would like to donate can contact any member of the Dawes County Ag Society.

One new thing, in terms of events, Brunsch added, is there will be mini-bull riding for ages 7-13 and senior bull riding for ages 8-14 in the youth rodeo Monday, Aug. 2. The miniature bulls look just like full-grown animals except for their size. The

senior division will have regular size animals. She's excited for the additions, as it is the first time since she's been helping with the youth rodeo that they have rough stock.

The fair board has also been working closely with Fur Trade Days, for the demolition derby this weekend.

The fair theme this year, "Get Out of Your Shell at the Fair," encourages everyone to come and join in the fun, and enter exhibits if they want.

The fair gets underway on

Please see **FAIR**, Page A4

# Bands event opens with Bar Flies

**MARK DYKES**

As part of the fun this week with Fur Trade Days, the park just east of Main Street and First is home to the initial concert in the 2021 Bands on Bordeaux featuring local favorite 'Bar Flies.'

Band members Dave Hockenbary and Brian Pankonin started playing together in 2005 in a band called "Police Beat," and were with them until 2008 when members started moving on. Pankonin started playing with what was then then "Bahr Flies," as it was originally Rick Bahr's band. It was another year before Hockenbary joined, during a show that mixed Bahr Flies and Police Beat.

Hockenbary explained he and Scott Fernau spent stage time trading off on drums, and when not hitting the skins Hockenbary would sing leads or harmonies. Fernau would later leave Bahr Flies, so Hockenbary jumped on drums for a while. At that time, the band also included Pankonin, Bahr and Rana Tucker. They picked up Brian Richards as a drummer, so Hockenbary took to the mic and they had four voices again.

Kassyopea Schrader joined almost five years ago, playing with the band until recently. "She's not out of the band," Hockenbary emphasized. "She just recently had a baby so her dad, John Varga, is filling in for her while she's with her child."

Three years ago, Richards left and the band picked up Pete Baumgarten as a drummer. "Pete brings a certain amount of precision to us," Hockenbary said. "Brian and I have just learned stuff on the fly and put things together easily. Pete's a lot more structured. He learns songs almost verbatim and makes us stick to it. It's something we

Please see **BANDS**, Page A4

## OBITUARIES | PAGE A3

- Albert Schramm, 92
- Robert Lembke, 82
- Alannah Fields, 24
- Emily Misner, 21
- Mary Martin

SPORTS B1  
FAITH B5  
CLASSIFIED B6



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# Vail named Heritage Hero

CRAWFORD - Preserving history for future generations takes an understanding of the past and a vision for the future. In Crawford, Charlene Vail, a volunteer at the Crawford Historical Museum, possesses both of those qualities.

Vail was recently presented with a Heritage Hero certificate and pin from History Nebraska for her efforts to keep the town's

history alive and accessible.

"Charlene has worked tirelessly to keep the museum open," wrote fellow volunteer Carol Foster in her nomination of Vail for the award. "Charlene knows the importance of keeping objects for family history, and she wants to save this town's and Fort Robinson's history. It is hard to put into words what a big project this has been for her."

Vail was presented with the Heritage Hero Award June 29 at the museum by History Nebraska board member and former State Senator Bob Wickersham. Vail's contribution to local preservation efforts are also a contribution to the state, he said.

The Crawford Historical Museum was established in its

Please see **VAIL**, Page A4