

GOVERNMENT

Sen. Fischer talks unity, beef and more

By OLIVIA WIESELER
Star-Herald

Nebraska Sen. Deb Fischer stopped at the Star-Herald Tuesday on a statewide tour to discuss some of the projects she's working on and give an update on what's going on in the nation's capitol.

Fischer said it's important for her to see how the communities in her

state are doing.

Fischer's visit came as the Senate's parliamentarian determined that Democrats would be able to do a third budget reconciliation bill this year. The measure allows Democrat lawmakers to pass more legislation without Republican support.

"With the news that we heard (Monday), about the reconciliation, the

parliamentarian making a judgment that none of us really expected — that reconciliation can be used for a number of things now ... that's really horrible," she said. "It's upsetting, it's bleak."

"That's how it is, which is different from

my message I usually give, because I like to come and talk about all the great things we're working on together and what we can accomplish, and how it's going to help the people of Nebraska.

see GOVERNMENT 3A

Brad Staman/Star-Herald

Nebraska Senator Deb Fischer talks with reporters at the Star-Herald Tuesday. Sen. Fischer is traveling across the state listening and sharing with citizens.



PANHANDLE

COVID-19 variant detected

Residents can sign up for vaccine on their own.

By MAUNETTE LOEKS
Star-Herald

The Panhandle is reporting low COVID-19 case numbers, though caution is needed as one of the COVID-19 variants has been detected in two counties.

Paulette Schnell, Scotts Bluff County Health director, reported that the Panhandle reported just 18 cases of COVID-19 last week.

"I think this is the lowest number we've had to report in a very long time," she said.

Scotts Bluff County had the highest number of cases, with 9 cases. Cases were reported in Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Grant, Morrill and Sheridan counties. The positivity rate has dropped down to 4.48% and there are no active hospitalizations in the Panhandle, as of Monday, April 5. There are five deaths pending verification.

On Friday, Schnell said Panhandle officials received notification the B.1.1.7 COVID-19 variant, first identified in the U.K., was detected among four people in two Panhandle counties.

She described the B.1.1.7 COVID-19 variant as a "much more contagious and severe COVID strain."

The variant was initially detected in the U.S. in December. It's not the only variant circulating in the state. As of Monday morning, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services said in a press release, 140 cases of the B.1.1.7 COVID-19 variant (the U.K. variant), 42 cases of the B1.427/B1.429 variant (the California variant), and two cases of the P.1 variant (the Brazil variant) have been identified in Nebraska.

Regarding the B.1.1.7 COVID-19 variant, Schnell said, "this variant seems to spread more easily and quickly than any other variant which may lead to more COVID cases and

see COVID-19 3A

SCOTTSBLUFF HIGH MUSICAL



OLIVIA WIESELER/Star-Herald

Adam Polk as Will Parker and Elli Bauerkemper as Ado Annie Carnes discuss their potential future together.

It's SHOWTIME



OLIVIA WIESELER/Star-Herald

Abigail Webb in her role as Laurey tells Ayden Reed in his role as Curly what he needs to do to stop people thinking the two of them are in love during the first act of 'Oklahoma!'

Two years later, SHS musical theater program ready to perform.

By OLIVIA WIESELER
Star-Herald

After two years without a performance, the Scottsbluff High School spring musical program takes the stage this week with eight shows over five days.

The students began with two shows of their musical, "Oklahoma!" during the day for elementary and middle school students on Tuesday and will perform two more shows for the rest of the area youngsters. Due to COVID-19 and social distancing measures, the SHS performers take on two extra shows this year.

The rest of the public will be able to attend performances beginning Thursday.

see MUSICAL 2A

Inside Today

Local 1A-3A
Opinion 4A

Obituaries 5A
State 6A
Sports 1-2B

Comics 3B
Nation 4B
Weather 6B

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