

Northwest uses late rally to defeat Aurora

The Grand Island Independent

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Saving Private Hegwood



A burned helmet sits atop a pole in front of framing for Ken Hegwood's rebuilt workshop in Hansen on Monday. A June 30 fire burned the shop to the ground, taking with it hundreds of pieces of military memorabilia and artwork.



WWII veteran, artist was recipient of old-fashioned barn-raising in Hansen

By Kit Grode
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HANSEN — Steve Gerritsen always wanted to serve his country. “I came from a big military family,” Gerritsen said. His father served in the Army in Korea, Company K, 55th Infantry, 3rd Division, and his uncle did tours in both Korea and Vietnam. But Gerritsen’s own service in the Marines was cut short. “I flew out of Omaha into Pendleton, and I lasted just two weeks,” he said, sent home via medical discharge. However, Gerritsen’s interest in the military goes beyond service to his country. He is an auctioneer special-

izing in Civil War items, and the history caught — and held — his attention. And a quiet, but meaningful, part of that history is found just about in his own backyard in the form of an 88-year-old World War II veteran and artist, Pvt. Ken Hegwood. And when Hegwood, whom Gerritsen has known since Gerritsen was 14, needed help, there was really no question about how Gerritsen would respond. ■ turn to **BARN-RAISING**, page 9A



Steve Gerritsen



ABOVE: Ken Hegwood steadies the charred and fire-blackened sign he used to advertise his work at collectors shows and sales.

RIGHT: Hegwood shows off a military helmet he painted for political cartoonist Karl Hubenthal, referencing a 1968 poster Hubenthal drew during the Vietnam War. Of the 300 helmets in Hegwood’s shop at the time of the fire, this helmet was one of the best-preserved.

Independent/Kit Grode

Nebraska reimposes restrictions

Ricketts announces four steps to take effect Wednesday

By Jeffrey Robb and Julie Anderson
Omaha World-Herald
LINCOLN — Nebraska will reimpose a set of public health restrictions as the state’s COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations climb to record numbers. Gov. Pete Ricketts on Friday announced four steps that will go into effect Wednesday and stay in place at least through Nov. 30.



Gov. Pete Ricketts

■ Hospitals will need to protect 10% of their bed and intensive care availability to leave room for incoming COVID-19 patients. ■ Indoor gatherings in public places must be smaller. They can now go up to 75% of their rated occupancy, but that will drop to 50%. In addition, individual groups at a gathering will be limited to eight per party.

■ People patronizing bars and restaurants must remain seated, with table sizes limited to eight people. ■ Wedding and funeral receptions must limit table sizes to eight people.

The new restrictions do not include a statewide mask mandate. Ricketts said it “pains me” to impose restrictions on people, but the state needs to protect the state’s hospital capacity.

He cited the example of Italy, where hospitals became overwhelmed earlier this year as coronavirus cases soared there.

Ricketts’ announcement comes as the state has emerged as a hot spot for COVID-19, both in terms of new cases and hospitalizations.

Nebraska on Friday ranked No. 6, ahead of No. 7 Iowa, in terms of new per capita cases over the preceding seven days, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Indeed, the state on Friday was adding COVID-19 cases at an average rate of 37.6 per 100,000 residents, according to the CDC data. That’s up from 23.2 on May 8, the earlier peak of COVID-19 cases in Nebraska. ■ turn to **REIMPOSING COVID RULES**, page 2A

Ricketts visits Central Nebraska Regional Airport’s new firehouse

By Brandon Summers
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Gov. Pete Ricketts, Mayor Roger Steele and Grand Island and Hall County leaders celebrated Central Nebraska Regional Airport’s new firehouse Friday with a ribbon-cutting event, hosted by the Grand Island Area Chamber of Commerce. The new Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Facility replaces a brick firehouse built in 1965. At 6,200 square feet, it is nearly twice as large. The project cost roughly \$3.3 million, with 95% of the funding coming from a federal airport improvement grant. Construction began in September 2019. The airport also purchased a new 1,500-gallon firetruck, replacing a 1982 model. The new truck cost \$714,000, with 95% from federal funds.



Central Nebraska Regional Airport’s new aircraft rescue and fire fighting facility, on Sky Park Road, cost about \$3.3 million, with 95% of the funds coming from a federal airport improvement grant. A new firetruck, replacing a 1982 model, was also shown Friday at a ribbon-cutting event hosted by Grand Island Area Chamber of Commerce. Independent/Brandon Summers

manufacturer’s Month, the mayor called the new facility “a testament to Grand Island, Nebraska, being a powerhouse of manufacturing.” “This is a beautiful facility, and all of the hard work and planning is evident,” Steele said. It has been a challenging year for air travel due to the pandemic. “This airport has weathered difficult times before, and it will again,” he said. Steele celebrated the city’s partnership with the airport. “Partnerships like this show how two government agencies can work together to keep costs down and toward a shared goal of creating a vibrant and progressive airport to serve our community,” he said. Central Nebraska Regional Airport is the “front door” to Grand Island, Steele said. ■ turn to **AIRPORT RIBBON-CUTTING**, page 2A

Ricketts called it a “great day” for the airport. “This represents a continued investment in the growth of Grand Island,” he said. Airports are important for facilitating the commerce and travel that allows cities like Grand Island to grow, Ricketts said. “We need to continue to make sure we maintain our air traffic links so that we can see that continued commerce and travel,” he said. Steele said the new firehouse represents many hours of hard work. In recognition of National Man-



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