

# The Elgin Review

Wednesday  
January 1, 2025

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## In Brief

### January Elgin City Council meeting is Monday

At City Hall beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Monday night, January 6, will be the first meeting of the new calendar year for the Elgin City Council.

Scheduled to begin promptly at 7:30 p.m. at City Hall, the meeting, like all regular meetings, is open to the public.

According to City Clerk Kristin Childers, items listed on the tentative agenda Monday morning include:

- Consideration of removal of fluoride from the city water supply
- Consideration of bids for the alley inlet on Bowen Street

Members of the council this year are Mike Dvorak, Leigh Kluthe, Craig Niewohner and Dr. Jeremy Young.

### Tickets now on sale for 'Evening With Friends' gala

To be held on Sunday, January 26.

"A Night to Sparkle" is the theme for the 2025 Evening With Friends gala.

Once again the Elgin Knights of Columbus Hall will host the event. This year marks the 25th year for the event.

It will be held on Sunday evening, January 26.

Social hour and auction viewing will begin at 5 p.m. that night with dinner to follow at 6:15 p.m. There will be both a silent and live auction held following the dinner.

Tickets are now on sale. Cost of the tickets are \$100 per person (need not be present to win) and can be purchased by contacting any member of the Committee for The Continuation of Pope John.

One-half of each ticket (\$50) is tax deductible.

This event is held annually as part of a fundraiser to support education offered at Pope John Central Catholic school here in Elgin.



### Old-time business building torn down

E-R photo/DMorgan

Work began Friday and concluded over the weekend as the former Elgin Feeders Supply building was torn down to make way for Blend & Brew 402 drive through to be located at the corner of Second Avenue and Cedar Streets.

### AC Shooters Club Gun Show to be held January 4-5

It's an event which people look forward to every year following New Year's Day.

The 35th annual Gun Show at the Antelope County Fairgrounds will be held on Saturday and Sunday, January 4-5.

Attendees will be able to buy/sell/trade guns during the two-day event.

The doors will open Saturday at 9 a.m. and go til 5 p.m. On Sunday, show hours will be 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be a snack bar and 24-hour security provided.

The event is sponsored annually by the Antelope County Shooters Club (ACSC). All firearm laws will be observed.

Public admission is \$5 per day. Children under 12 will be admitted free if accompanied by an adult.

ACSD is not responsible for theft or accident related to the gun show.

For more information contact John Eichberger (402) 640-1310.

## The Year in Review: July to December 2024

The second half of 2024 offered a wide array of headlines which filled the pages of *The Elgin Review*. Among them were:

### July

Meeting Monday night, the Elgin City Council approved up to \$10,000 in sales tax funds to be used to pursue LB 840, a community tax-funded economic development program.

In a month where precipitation has been more the norm than in past years, June's weather has made the corn fields around Elgin reach for the skies. Long gone are the years when saying 'knee high by the Fourth of July' was how fields were measured.

Recently, Pope John announced the hiring of a new development coordinator. In an announcement made on social media, Kari Schindler was hired to fill the position.

Elgin will have two softball teams in action in separate Class D State Tournaments this weekend. On Friday afternoon both teams (10 & Under and 12 & Under) will be in action at Hastings.

For Camryn Pelster, Sunday night was one to remember as he picked up his first victory. Racing his Crown Vic at Junction Motor Speedway at McCool Junction, he won the feature race.

On Friday, July 12, the Antelope County Healthcare Foundation held its 19th Annual Golf Tournament at the Summerland Golf Club near Ewing. Ninety-two golfers from area communities and businesses participated in the 18-hole tournament.

Free Red Cross swimming lessons - courtesy of the Bargain Box - concluded last week at the Elgin Swimming Pool. Nearly 90 youth took advantage of the lessons over a two-week period.

One of the first events this year at the Antelope County Fair was the small animal show.

Louise Schindler of rural Elgin, having completed a long career in education at ESU#8, was presented the Christa McAuliffe Prize for Excellence in Education. The presentation took place at a school administrators conference held in Kearney.

### August

In an emotional ceremony which left many Antelope County Fair superintendents wiping their eyes, Extension Educator Tessa Hain was recognized for her 11 years of dedication to the fair. Hain will soon be leaving the extension office to accept a position with Educational Service Unit #8.

Youth and adults from across Antelope county - and neighboring counties - participated in the fair these last two weeks. From pre-fair setup to packing away the final livestock gates and filing the paperwork fairs are a lot of fun mixed in with a whole lot of work.

The Elgin Bargain Box is celebrating its 10th anniversary on August 14. Opening on August 15, 2024, it was hoped that enough donations would be received to make the Box a success. Being "built" from the vision of three women - Linda Kerkman, Phyllis Camp and Barb Finn - they had no idea where the road would lead.

Elgin Swimming Pool will soon be closing for the season. At Monday night's meeting, held at the Elgin Public Library, of the Elgin City Council, it was decided that this Sunday, August 18, will be final day the pool will be open for the season.

Elgin schools opened their doors for the new school year last week.

The Antelope County Healthcare Foundation made a generous donation to the Elgin Rescue Service fund drive toward a new ambulance. During a brief presentation Thursday at the Bank of Elgin, Foundation Board Members Samantha Stoltz, Janet Koinzan and Gina Moser presented



E-R photo/LMorgan

Kaitey Schumacher was crowned PJCC Homecoming Queen.

See **YEAR**, Page 7 ▶

## Public Notices

Public notices in this week's newspaper include:  
Notice to Bidders - The Antelope County Board of Commissioners

The Elgin Review is the official legal newspaper for Antelope County, Antelope County Historical Society, Village of Bartlett, Upper Elkhorn Natural Resources District, the State of Nebraska, the City of Elgin and Elgin School District #18.

## Weather

The high temperature last week was 57 degrees recorded on December 28.

The low temperature during the same period was 20 degrees recorded on December 22.

No precipitation was recorded last week in the form of rain.

Following are the high and low temperatures, and precipitation amounts, as recorded by Elgin weather observer Leonard Orlowski.

Date	High	Low	Prec
Dec. 22	55	20	.00
Dec. 23	50	22	.00
Dec. 24	30	22	.00
Dec. 25	32	22	.00
Dec. 26	39	32	.00
Dec. 27	47	25	.00
Dec. 28	57	27	.00
Total for last week			0.00
Total for December			0.00
Total precipitation 2024			20.94



E-R photo/DMorgan

## Make room in the trophy case

Winning never gets old. Once again, just as it has been in recent years, the Wolfpack girls basketball team are champions of the Madison Holiday Basketball Tournament. Wearing their white jerseys, the Wolfpack dominated Madison, nearly doubling the score on the Dragons Saturday afternoon to claim the championship trophy. Members of the team are (front row, l-r): Braelyn Martinsen, Mady Kurpgeweit, Kate Furstenuau, Callie Heithoff and Kayton Zwingman. Back row: Head Coach Randy Eisenhauer, Kierstyn Eisenhauer, Trissa Russell, Elizabeth Moser, Kinley Druke, Dannyka Smidt and Ass't. Coach Trent Ostransky.

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From JoAnn Baum's Kitchen

# Easy Strawberry, Italian Vegetable salads



Happy New Years! I can't believe the year's gone! I hope you all have

some plans to ring in the New Year. As we close out another year I want to take a minute to say "thank you" to so many of you who follow my column.

I so enjoy sharing the recipes I love to make, and bake. May God bless you all in the New Year!

JoAnn



## EASY STRAWBERRY SALAD

- 1 small box cooking vanilla pudding
- 1 small box cooking tapioca pudding
- 1 small box strawberry Jello\*
- 1 8 oz carton Cool Whip\*

Freshly sliced strawberries (2 cups)

Combine puddings and Jello\* with 3 cups water. Bring to a boil and cool. Add Cool Whip\* and strawberries and mix. Chill it!

## ITALIAN VEGETABLE SALAD

- 1-1/2 cups shell macaroni (cooked)
- 2 cups fresh broccoli
- 1 cup fresh cauliflower
- 1 cup fresh sliced mushrooms
- 1 6 oz can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped

- 1 cup sliced black olives
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 medium tomato diced
- 2/3 cup Italian salad dressing

Cook macaroni, rinse, and drain. Combine all the ingredients. Toss with the dressing. Be sure to chill overnight. This recipe makes 12-16 servings.

## Test scores used to rank schools in Nebraska

LINCOLN — A majority of Nebraska school districts continue to be classified as "excellent" or "great," though a greater percentage — about a third — are now classified as "good" or "needs support to improve."

According to annual data from the Nebraska Department of Education, the percentage of students in grades 3-8 who tested proficient in English language arts rose by 1%, to having 59% on track or at an advanced level. The percentage of students proficient in math fell 4%, to 58% of students in grades 3-8. The math test is based on new state standards approved in 2022.

### Dig into the data

Students who were tested in science in grades 5 and 8 continue to score high, rising to 74% proficiency. This is the second straight year that the science scores have risen by 4%.

Test scores are again above pre-pandemic levels, higher than in 2022, when proficiency scores in English language arts fell to 47% and math fell to 46% during the 2021-22 school year.

"We need to continue to work together as a state to provide the best possible opportunities for every student to succeed and be prepared for life after school," Brian Maher, state education commissioner, said at a news conference last week.

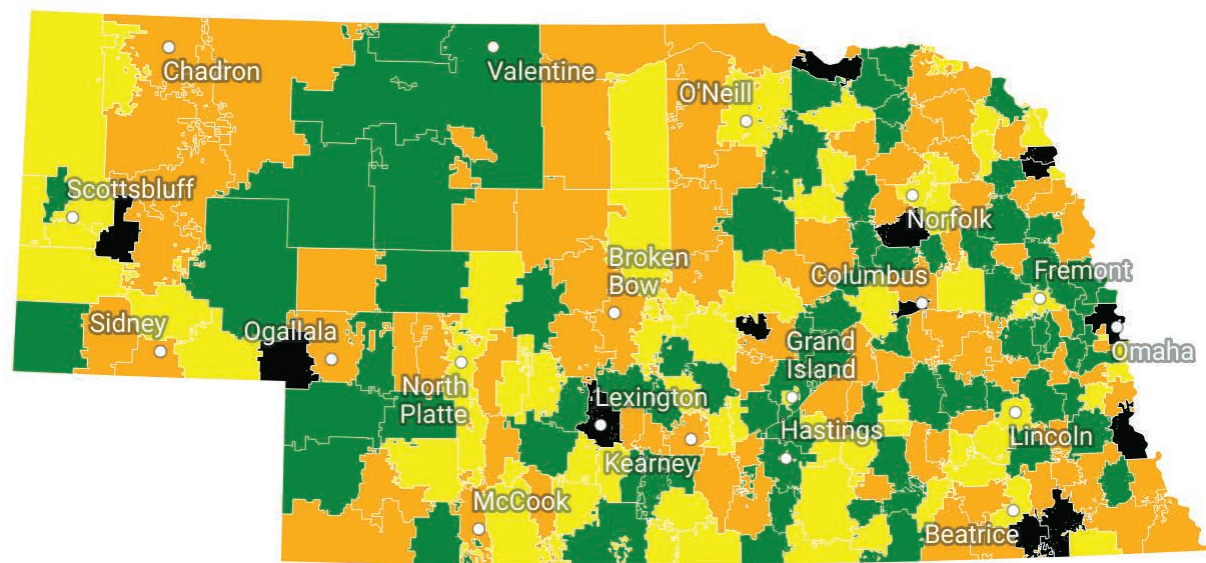
High school juniors, who all take the ACT, were 45% proficient in English language arts, 42% in math and 49% in science. Maher cautioned the ACT scores are based on national standards but do offer opportunities to compare how Nebraska

## Nebraska school districts classifications, 2024

Nebraska classifies its 244 school districts to help ensure all students from all backgrounds and circumstances have access to quality educational experiences and opportunities, according to Brian Maher, Nebraska's education commissioner. Classifications are based on a variety of factors, including student performance in English language arts, math and science, as well as chronic absenteeism and graduation rates. This year, 13 school districts are at the lowest classification; 76 districts are at the highest.

### 2023-24 Classification

- Excellent
- Great
- Good
- Needs support to improve



\*Some data is masked by the State Education Department for privacy reasons.

Map: Zach Wendling/Nebraska Examiner • Source: Nebraska Department of Education • Created with Datawrapper

students are doing next to other states.

Maher noted improvements among many student groups but said achievement gaps persist based on race, ethnicity, special education, low-income and En-

glish language learners.

State classifications

State and federal law requires the Nebraska Department of Education to classify schools and school districts in one of four ways to signal which ones may

need specific support, including state funding.

Nebraska's "Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow" model, or AQUeSTT, measures schools and districts on various factors, including proficiency scores in English language arts and math, chronic absenteeism and graduation rates.

The most recent classifications:

- 323 schools are "excellent"

See **SCHOOLS**, Page 7 ▶

## NDE now ranks District #18 'good' compared to 'excellent' in 2023

According to annual data from the Nebraska Department of Education, School District #18 has dropped from 'excellent' to 'good' after compiling AQUeSTT results.

Scores show the following in comparison from 2023 to 2024:

- English Language Arts (grades 3-8): 64% (2023) down to 55 percent (2024).
- Math (grades 3-8) 79% down to 49%
- Science (grades 5 & 8) 75% down to 71%
- ACT ELA (grade 11) \* to 75%
- ACT Math (grade 11) \* to 88%
- ACT Science (grade 11) \* to 88%

\* denotes some data being masked by the State Education Department for privacy reasons.

The Elgin Review asked District #18 Superintendent Mike Brockhaus on Friday for a response to the test scores.

He said, "We have an excellent staff that works hard with our students every day and they do amazing things in the classroom on a daily basis."

"Many of these amazing things may not show up on a statewide assessment, which is a large piece of the AQUeSTT rating system, but they happen and we are very proud of them."

"We have consistently been rated as either Excellent or Great in recent years and we will work diligently to receive those ratings in the very near future."

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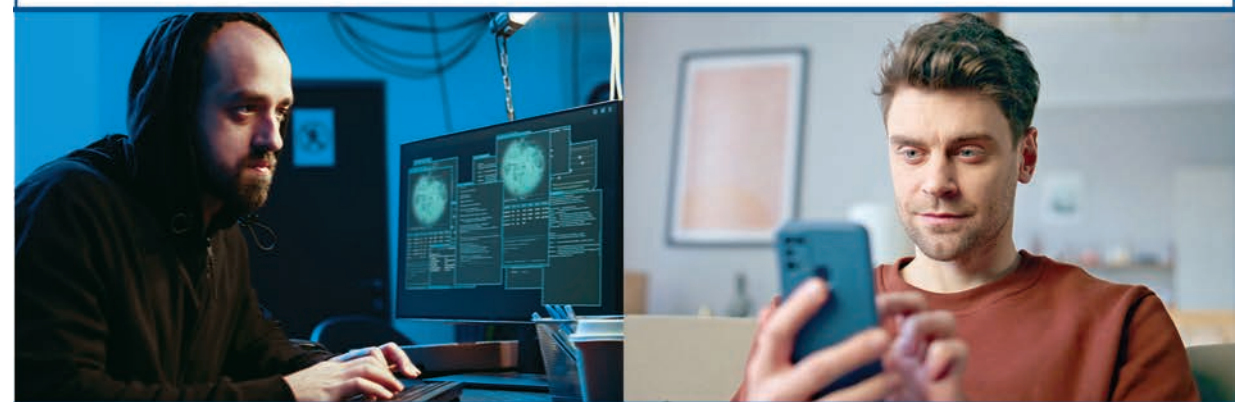
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## Who's calling or texting you?

The number may look local but is it really?

Scammers, hackers, phishing campaigns through emails and social media -- they are all designed to get your information, to get your money. They use phone numbers from local areas to trick people into answering the call or text.



The FBI reported that, in 2023, **MORE THAN 880,000 AMERICANS REPORTED LOSING \$12.5 BILLION** to internet scams.

These criminals are good at what they do, tricking people into giving them information.

If you think your personal information has been compromised, don't be embarrassed -- be proactive!! Give us a call or stop in so we can discuss the situation and protect your accounts as soon as possible. We'll help you every step of the way - because our customers are "family".

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# The many uses for the word 'present'

The post-Christmas present return thing always seems a bit off to me. Being present with family and friends over the holidays often has the most lasting value.

- Check out these stats presented by 'Googling it' --
  - Returns have increased for eight consecutive years, with 27-33% of adult Americans expected to make a return before the end of January.
  - Five billion pounds of gift returns end up in landfills every year.
  - Americans spent \$15.2 billion on all those unwanted gifts.
- Just to vent at the present moment, consider these questions -- Do we give presents because we actually love someone? Or is it an expectation? Sure, the thrill of Santa visiting on Christmas Eve is great for a five-year-old, though maybe the 15-year-old would remember an experience more. Maybe a concert, or a Husker game, or a ski trip, or a new-release movie out with the family.
- On to some cheerier thoughts in this new year of 2025. Ever notice how opportunities present themselves throughout your lifetime? Maybe a coveted offer for a job or a chance to launch a thriving business, or going on a blind date or getting a college scholarship.

Reply with 'yes' and maybe it was the best decision ever or say 'no' and regrets haunt you the rest of your days.

Likely those opportunities came up because you learned how to present yourself. There's no time like the present to teach these and more to the little people in your life.

A simple etiquette checklist might go something like below. Maybe it's a list of New Year's resolutions. Old school, you say; that's one opinion. Here goes --

- Say please and thanks. Especially on that last one, what happened to the handwritten thank you note? A text message is better than nothing, it's said.
- Practice good table manners. How can children learn these if meals are consumed on the run or in front of the TV all the time?
- Use respectful language. Went to a comedy club recently in downtown Norfolk, where the f-bomb was in every phrase. When did such word choices become so prevalent and how can we encourage otherwise?
- Dress appropriately. Went on a European trip a few years ago when our tour guide would go to restaurant tables of people she didn't know and tell men to take off their ball caps.
- Be respectful of the opinions of others, even though they might not align with yours. If we all thought alike, the world would be a boring place.
- Learn how to manage your phone so you're really present with someone. Maybe put it on vibrate if you're awaiting a call from the doc or the babysitter. Cell phone management is a tricky one since we use it to Airdrop photos, get directions, or find the nearest gas pump.

Isn't it wonderful when we get to present a scholarship to a deserving student? Or how about a plaque celebrating sustained community service? To be recognized by your peers is one of the most wonderful presents of all.

Sometimes we're asked to present a report. For example, a recent conversation with our Elgin Public Library librarians indicated they would present the video about the new children's library in Kenya to the Elgin City Council. Our local library sent 610 books there that had been gleaned from the shelves to make room for new releases.

Some live in the past, or long for the future. Experts tell us we need to learn from the past, prepare for the future, and definitely live in the present taking advantage of every precious moment.

There's no time like the present to thank you for reading this 'Say What?' column. As 2025 launches, this is the 133rd. At the present time, there are no plans for running out of words and phrases to present to you.

All good wishes in the new year!  
Comments welcome at [jane.schuchardt@gmail.com](mailto:jane.schuchardt@gmail.com).

## Say What?



Elgin Columnist  
Jane Schuchardt

# Looking Back

The Elgin Review

Sixty Years Ago

December 24, 1964

Lawrence Baum and Fern Meyers were united in marriage Wednesday, Dec. 16, 1964 at Christ the King church in Omaha. The Rev. Fr. Huff officiated.

Bob Englehardt, engineer for Channel 9 at Sioux City, Ia, stated Tuesday that he has hopes of getting all of the UHF-TV equipment installed Wednesday, weather permitting. This means they should be able to start testing the equipment this week and maybe they could have the transmitter in operation before New Year's Day.

Mrs. Joseph Faust, Miller, S.D., passed away there this week. Mrs. Faust, the former Katherine Selting, lived in this community until 1930 when the family moved to South Dakota. She was preceded in death by her husband.

Fifty Years Ago

December 26, 1974

Two Elgin students were listed among the 1,000 to graduate from the University of Nebraska Lincoln at the end of the first semester. Steve Koinzan received a master of science degree and Kathy Jo Kouri received her bachelor of arts degree.

Highlight of the annual Elgin FFA Chapter Christmas party Thursday, Dec. 19 was the crowning of their Chapter Sweetheart, Chris Wildman. She had been chosen and was presented a bouquet of yellow roses and a sweetheart trophy.

Frances M. Jochum, daughter of Joseph and Josephine Osterhouse Schrad, was born Dec. 6, 1894 at Arcadia, Ia., and departed this life Dec. 18, 1974 at Hope Memorial Hospital in Neligh at the age of 80 years and 12 days.

Carol Maly of O'Neill became the bride of Ken Pelster of Bartlett on Saturday, Nov. 30, 1974. The 2:00 p.m., double ring ceremony was performed in St. Patrick's Catholic Church in O'Neill with Fr. James Buschelman officiating.

Ralph Whitwer of Petersburg and Harlan Brown of Scottsbluff will continue as Nebraska's delegates to the American Sheep Producers Council.

Thirty Years Ago

December 21, 1994

Young Students performed holiday music with enthusiasm at the St. Boniface School Christmas Concert, "The All-American Christmas," held Monday evening at St. Boniface Church.

Leah Frasch of Elgin was one of 139 students to graduate from Southeast Community College, Milford Campus, on Thursday, Dec. 15. Leah received an Associate of Applied Science degree in Architectural Technology.

Spc. Jeremie L. Kerkman, son of Leroy and Linda Kerkman of rural Elgin, was one of 23 members of Nebraska's Army and Air National Guard who were honored Nov. 19 at the Offutt Air Force Base officer club by the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben as 1994 outstanding citizen-soldier.

Elgin Woman's Club held a Christmas salad luncheon meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 13, at the home of Lois Donner with 17 members present. The club decided to send a \$20 contribution to the Good Neighbor fund, and donate a box of canned goods to Joan Hoffman in Petersburg.

Twenty Years Ago

December 29, 2004

A group of investors has purchased the former GCS, Inc. Pronto Travel Plaza in Elgin, and they plan to reopen the business in January. The business will be known as Elgin One Stop, and will be an independent fuel dealer.

John and Tracy Beckman of Elgin are the parents of a son, Carter John, born Sunday, Dec. 19, at the Boone County Health Center, Albion. He weighed five pounds, eight ounces, and joins two sisters, Allison and Nicole, at home.

Rev. Tom Bauwens presented two \$1,000 checks — one to Clara Kamphaus and one to Marie Smith. They won the St. Boniface Calendar Lottery 2004 Christmas Drawing.

Pope John Central Catholic students presented their annual Christmas Concert, "Songs of Peace," at St. Boniface Church last Tuesday evening, Dec. 21. The concert featured religious music of the season, interspersed with Bible readings by Pope John faculty members.

After nearly four years as director of the Boone County Health Center Foundation, Anne Parks of Elgin offered her resignation during the foundation board's December meeting.

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## Community Calendar

\* See ad/story in this week's Elgin Review

**Wednesday, January 1**  
Happy New Year's Day • Elgin Community/Senior Center closed.

**Friday and Saturday, January 4-5**  
AC Shooters Club Gun Show\*.

**Monday, January 6**  
Elgin City Council regular meeting.

**Tuesday, January 7**  
Elgin schools resume classes • Antelope County Board of Commissioners regular meeting • Wolfpack Volleyball Awards @ EPS Gym.

**Tuesday, January 14**  
Antelope County Board of Commissioners regular meeting.

**Wednesday, January 15**  
District #18 Board of Education regular meeting.

**Monday, January 20**  
No School at Elgin Schools (teacher in-service).

**Sunday, January 26**  
25th Annual "Evening With Friends".

Events listing courtesy of  
**ELGIN VETERANS' MEDICAL CLINIC**  
an outpatient department of Boone County Health Center  
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Join Us At The  
25th Annual  
Evening With Friends  
Fundraiser Gala

A Night To  
**Sparkle**

Sunday,  
**January 26**  
Elgin Knights of  
Columbus Hall

Social Hour & Auction Viewing  
begins at 5 PM | Dinner at 6:15 PM

**TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW!**

Contact Pope John XXIII Central Catholic School at **402-843-5325** or any EWF committee member!

# Opinion

READ, REFLECT, RESPOND.

*"To be persuasive, we must be believable; to be believable, we must be credible; credible, we must be truthful."*

Edward R. Murrow

## Governor, legislature to try again to tame the state's high property taxes

Governor, legislators try again to tame the state's high property taxes. Now that Gov. Jim Pillen appears to be on the road to recovery after a wild ride aboard a bucking bronco, his next rodeo act will be roping up enough votes to lower property taxes, cut government spending and return Nebraska to a "winner-take-all" system of doling out the state's electoral college votes.

Those are among the top priorities laid out by the governor - before he was bucked off a reportedly new horse - for the 2025 session of the Nebraska Legislature, which begins on January 8.

At the top of the list is something that is at the top of the list every year, by every governor: reduce property taxes.

### ALL THINGS NEBRASKA



State Correspondent Paul Hammel

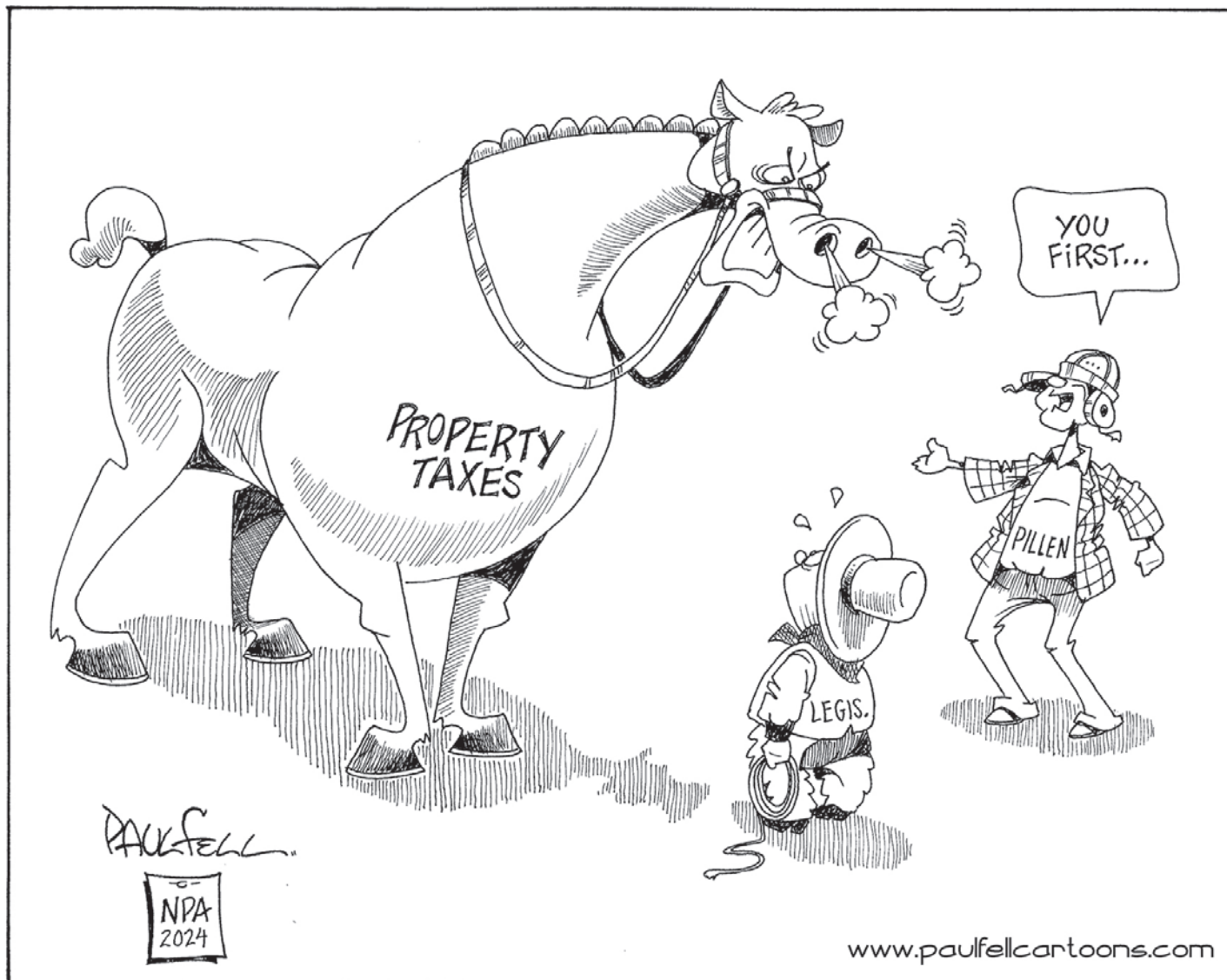
Nebraska is a state with a lot of land but not a lot of people, and a place where special interests, if they threaten loudly enough to move their companies away, get generous sales and income tax breaks from our lawmakers. Thus property taxes, one of the alternatives, have remained high.

But the odds of Pillen riding a plan to victory that reduces property taxes seem pretty long, about as long as getting back up on that wild horse.

State lawmakers spent several days in Lincoln this summer trying to hash out a property tax relief plan without much success, and you wonder if there's a little tax-relief fatigue after pounding their heads against the wall for several weeks.

Taxation is a complicated subject with lots and lots of proposals to reduce property tax and not enough agreement on how to do it. Thus, it's hard to get much done. Secondly, the November elections are bringing in a new wave of legislators - 18 in all - so it will take some time for them to get acclimated to the ins and outs of tax reform, and come together on a plan.

And among the departing senators, due to term limits, is State Sen. Lou Ann Linehan, who chaired the Revenue Committee, which deals with tax



policies.

She was a pro at lining up support for plans advanced by the governor's office and crafting compromises, a skill honed in the halls of the U.S. Senate as an aide to then Sen. Chuck Hagel.

Like a big fullback, you need someone with some muscle to get proposals over the political goal line at crunch time. Linehan was that person, and her departure leaves a void.

Plus, there's a minor matter about the state budget, which has a projected \$432 million shortfall over the next two years.

(That shortfall would have been \$200 million larger had not the Legislature, during its special session, allocated \$200 million to reduce the budget hole,

reported Martha Stoddard of the Omaha World-Herald.)

So paring the budget or, gulp, finding new tax revenue will be a huge issue in 2025.

Already, one influential senator, Rob Clements, who chairs the budget-writing Appropriations Committee, said he doesn't see how lawmakers can enact more property tax relief measures - which typically reduce state tax revenue - when facing such a deficit.

The Legislature can utilize cash reserve funds - the so-called "rainy day fund" of the state - to handle some of the shortfall, but Clements said he expects that some budget cuts will also be necessary to balance the budget.

Pillen has also said he wants to re-

duce state spending in the next budget, a goal often voiced but rarely achieved due to inflation and the annual demand for more - not less - state services.

So saddle up Nebraskans, and keep a tight rein, as the governor, and state lawmakers seek to tame an ever bucking bronco named "High Property Tax."

\*\*\*\*\*

Paul Hammel has covered the Nebraska state government and the state for decades. He retired in April as senior contributor with the Nebraska Examiner. He was previously with the Omaha World-Herald, Lincoln Journal Star and Omaha Sun. A native of Ralston, Nebraska, he loves traveling and writing about the state.

## Trump's tariffs and what it means to Nebraska Nations are likely to play tough with Trump this time around

It's official: President-elect Donald Trump promises that on Day One, or Jan. 20, 2025, that his first executive action will be to put 25% tariffs on all imports from neighbors Canada and Mexico, and with a kicker of a 10% tariff levied against Chinese imports.

Trump makes many promises, and this pledge to start an international trade war may well be a bluff hoping for concessions from at least Canada and Mexico.

Even if these radical tariffs are executed, we will see for how long they last before concessions are made. Trump is a gamer and always counting on his bluster to force some results to fall out of the sky for which he can claim unprecedented success.

Trump's play is a high stakes game that could create a world trade war, international economic crisis, raining hell on America's families and businesses with supply shortages and dramatically higher prices. If Social Security recipients think the Trust Fund is in trouble now, just wait.

In 1929 America's stock market crash was largely an American crisis. But soon America First and protectionists enacted the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act. President Herbert Hoover and the Congress raised U.S. tariffs on over 20,000 imported goods resulting in an international trade war, with retaliatory tariffs by other countries reducing U.S. imports and exports by nearly 70% during the Great Depression.

This gamesmanship by Hoover and America First propagandists not only drove the U.S. into the Great Depression but ensured it would impact much of the world. And then came the rise of fascists, World War II and up to 85 million human deaths.

Let's consider what these tariffs could mean for just one critical economic Nebraska interest: agriculture. To provide context, we should consider who Trump is poking with his massive tariff promises. Mexico is America's largest trading partner with nearly \$480 billion in imports in 2023, followed by China with \$448 billion, and Canada with \$430 billion in imports.

Trade war games, even just talk, have potential consequences. Take China, for example. China will retaliate with its own tariffs, creating an escalating trade war.

Within months, all those relatively cheap Chinese consumer goods we buy daily, let alone all those inputs that keep our industries humming, will experience higher costs at best, and at worst massive supply chain disruptions. Now let's focus on

what this could mean for Nebraska agriculture.

Agriculture is huge, ranking among Nebraska's top three economic engines. According to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, "Nebraska Agriculture Depends Upon World Markets." From this same source, Nebraska is the nation's fifth largest agricultural exporting state, valued at \$10 billion alone in 2022.

When exports are strong, commodity prices are higher and net farm income robust.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, in a Nov. 15, 2024, report, raises warning signs of a weakening farm economy with prices comparable to 20 years ago, not even adjusting for inflation. This report highlights dropping farm income, rising debt, reduced capital investments, fewer farm machinery purchases and deteriorating balance sheets. Yearly closing prices for corn have dropped from \$6.79 in 2022 to just \$4.23 in 2024, or by nearly 40%. When dramatically higher production costs are considered, the numbers are even more depressing. Nebraska agriculture is already struggling. The loss of international markets would deepen us into severe recession.

Canada, Mexico, and China are major agricultural trading partners. When Trump during his first term in the White House started a trade war with China, Nebraska exports to China dried up, forcing the Trump administration to pump billions in farm welfare to commodity farmers to offset losses.

Farmers hate welfare and just want fair prices, and robust international trade is key to strengthening profits and income, not unreasonable tariffs and trade wars.

Even if Trump's tariff promises are simply bluffs, other nations are more than capable of shifting where they buy farm products or other U.S. goods. China quickly pivoted its farm purchases to South America and other producing nations, undermining Nebraska's exports long-term and maybe permanently. Damage is already being done by Trump's illogical obsession on tariffs, and Nebraska's farmers, agricultural related businesses and consumers will suffer the consequences.

The world of nations is learning that conceding to bullies only invites more bullying. They are likely to play tough with Trump this time around. Stay tuned as this story unfolds.

By Don Macke, Nebraska Examiner

## Editorial In the year 2025 let's do this ...

A new year beckons. 2025 is upon us and I think it's altogether right to ponder what's in front of us.

We tend to define time, here in rural America, by presidential terms in office. In a matter of a few weeks, the Biden years will be behind us as a new Trump administration begins. Whether your beliefs rest on the Right or the Left, one thing is clearly certain - change is going to come.

Closer to home, here in Elgin, our community leaders need to take stock in where we are and what progress we wish to seek in the years ahead.

In no particular order, here are some areas which we can focus on to make Elgin a better place to live and prosper.

An effort was made in 2024 to pursue implementing LB 840 to promote economic development as the City of Elgin authorized up to \$10,000 in sales tax funds to be used in this endeavor. Organizers ran out of time to get the matter on the ballot for the general election. There's no time restriction to run up against now. We should begin anew to pursue through LB 840, the means to provide financial incentive to help entrepreneurs.

One such avenue would be to create new housing. We need to provide opportunities for our best asset, our sons and daughters, to have reason to return home to work and live. We need only to look to the south and see how new housing has sprung up in Petersburg. If Petersburg can do it, why can't we?

Dennis Morgan, co-publisher

## Celebrating our National Guard

When you are elected Governor of a state, you take on an awesome responsibility - that of commander-in-chief. It's not something you get the chance to prepare or train for. It has been an eye-opening experience, in discovering all that our soldiers and airmen do.

2024 has involved multiple missions for our Nebraska Army and Air National Guard. There are too many to list, but highlights included:

- Assisting in the aftermath of the eastern Nebraska tornado
  - Supplementing rescue operations to Iowa's National Guard during the June floods
  - Deployment to the Texas border
  - Completing training operations with 7,500 Ukrainian soldiers in Germany
  - A mission to Guam involving the Air Guard's 155th Refueling Wing
- The men and women who fill our civilian military ranks are unique.

### FROM THE DESK OF...



Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen

See PILLEN, Page 5 ►

### Numbers to Know

President Joe Biden, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20510; phone (202) 456-1111.

U.S. Senate Website: [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

Senator Deb Fischer: 825 B Hart Senate Office Bldg., Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: (202) 224-6551. Fax: (202) 228-1325.

Senator Pete Ricketts: 386A Senate Russell Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. Phone (202) 224-4224.

U.S. House Website: [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

Representative Adrian Smith: 503 House Office Bldg., Wash-

ington, D.C. 20515-2703. Phone (202) 225-6435. Fax: (202) 225-0207. E-mail: <http://www.house.gov/writerep/>.

Nebr. Unicameral Website [www.unicam.state.ne.us](http://www.unicam.state.ne.us)

Governor Jim Pillen: Executive Suite, P.O. Box 94848, Lincoln, NE 68509. Phone: (402) 471-2244.

Lieutenant Governor Joe Kelly: Office of the Lt. Gov., P.O. Box 94863, Lincoln, NE 68509-4863. Phone: (402) 471-2256.

District 40 State Senator Barry DeKay: P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509. Phone: (402) 471-2801. E-mail: [bdekay@leg.ne.gov](mailto:bdekay@leg.ne.gov).



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### Bartlett News

Our thoughts and prayers are lifted up for the family of Aggie Hinkle of Spalding, Nebraska. Aggie died December 16, 2024 at the age of 88. Aggie and her husband Richard were long time residents of Wheeler County before retiring in Spalding.

Jessica Redman of Burwell performed a duet 'Little Drummer Boy' with her piano teacher Sherry Tetschner, and a piano solo 'Do You Hear What I Hear?' at the Burwell Baptist Church on Sunday morning, December 29.

The church service began with Jessica's Christmas pieces fol-



Jessica Redman (l) performed a piano duet 'Little Drummer Boy' with Sherry Tetschner (r) and a piano solo 'Do You Hear What I Hear' at the Burwell Baptist Church Sunday morning December 29th.

lowed by prayers. The remainder of the service featured the Seidel Family Ministry. The ministry includes Thomas and Joy Seidel and their children Sadie, Emsley, Josie, Audrey, Evy, Paisley, Levi, Eden, Andrew, Tad, Daniel, Ephraim and Evan. Thomas is the son of John and Cindy Lowery Seidel (formerly of the Burwell area.)

Those attending the church service enjoyed a concert performed by the family. The concert included a violin and piano duet, string quartet, cello solo, harp solo, husband and wife piano duet, saxophone and clarinet solo, father and daughter vocal duet and much more. The music featured sacred Christmas pieces.

One of final selections was the singing of 'Hallelujah' from the Hallelujah Chorus by the entire Seidel family.

Thomas gave a brief salvation message. We can answer the question "Do you know if you are going to heaven when you die?" with a confident 'Yes' when we accept Jesus as our Savior and put our trust in him, he said.

Christmas eve candle light services were held at the Bartlett Church of Faith with moderator Chris Olson. Tanner and John Olson read Christmas Bible scriptures. Special music featured Caleb Pahl with a vocal performance of 'O Holy Night' and a vocal duet 'Christmas Hallelujah' sung by Shannon Pahl and Justine Smith. The piece was accompanied by Sherry Tetschner.

### Pillen

**FROM Page 4**

They have jobs that require their full-time attention, and they supplement that with the necessary training and dedication it takes to serve in our National Guard. These are not weekend-warriors. Far from it. They are skilled, highly trained, and highly sought individuals who sacrifice their own personal time as well as time with their families, to be ready to go at a moment's notice.

This month marks two significant occasions for our National Guard. Last week, we recognized the 388th birthday of the U.S. National Guard, our nation's oldest military organization. Each year, my office has the privilege of acknowledging the outstanding achievements of our state's military members and using the traditional sword to cut the birthday cake.

Just before Christmas, the Nebraska National Guard recorded it's 170th birthday. It's

fitting that this month, I joined three state senators who passed legislation aimed at supporting our Guard members by covering their education costs, programs for recruitment and retention and at my request, making duty pay exempt from state income tax.

In the United States, we have much to be grateful for. But the opportunities we take for granted, don't come without cost. The men and women of our Nebraska and U.S. National Guard carry on a nearly four century tradition that began when colonists in Massachusetts organized three regiments to provide protection for their neighbors in case of an emergency.

Whenever our state, or nation or another country has needed help, our National Guard has been there, committed to the ideals of neighbors helping neighbors and being ready to meet those challenges head-on.

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**There was a man sent from God.** John 1:(1-9) 10-18  
Jeremiah 31:7-14 Ephesians 1:3-14 Psalm 147:12-20  
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[cppnebraska.org](http://cppnebraska.org)

**St. Bonaventure Catholic Church**  
Raeville, NE  
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Fr. Frank Baumert, Associate Pastor  
Weekend Mass: 1st, 3rd & 5th Sunday, 8 am.  
[cppnebraska.org](http://cppnebraska.org)

**Park Congregational U.C.C. Church**  
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Sunday Worship Service: 9:15 am.  
Sunday School: 10:15 am.  
Communion Sunday: 1st Sunday of each month. Park Women's Fellowship: 2 pm on the 3rd Thursday of each month at the church. Parish Council: 7:30 pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the church.

**St. John the Baptist Catholic Church**  
Petersburg, NE  
Fr. John Norman, Pastor  
Fr. Frank Baumert, Associate Pastor  
Weekend Mass: 2nd & 4th Sunday, 8 am.  
[cppnebraska.org](http://cppnebraska.org)

**Bartlett Church of Faith**  
Bartlett, NE  
Pastor Mark Hoffman  
Sunday Worship Service: 9 am.  
Sunday School: 10-10:45 am.

**Calvary Bible Church**  
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Pastor Peter Sample  
Sunday School: 9:30 am.  
Worship Service: 10:45 am.

**Trinity Lutheran Church**  
Elgin, NE  
Pastor Norlyn Bartens  
Sunday Worship Service: 8 am.  
Sunday school follows service.  
Saturday Evening Service: 6 pm on the 2nd Saturday of each month.

**Elgin Community Christian Church**  
Elgin, NE  
Pastor Jonathan Braden  
Adult Sunday School:  
Children Sunday School: 9:30 am.  
Sunday Worship Service: 9 am.  
Church Council: 2nd Sunday of each month following worship.

**St. John's Catholic Church**  
Rural Clearwater, NE  
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Fr. Frank Baumert, Associate Pastor  
Weekend Mass: 1st, 3rd & 5th Saturday, 5:30 am.  
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**St. Paul Lutheran Church**  
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Pastor Leif Hasskari  
Sunday Worship: 8:30 am.  
Sunday School/Bible Study: 9:30 am.

**Immanuel-Zion Lutheran Church**  
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Pastor Elizabeth Goehring  
Worship Service: 9:30 am.  
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Romans 11:36

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is confidence is what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.  
Hebrews 11:1

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# Ricketts riches: Record election spending shows senator's family isn't done in Nebraska

By Sara Gentzler and Alex Richards  
*Flatwater Free Press*

As a torrent of political ads flooded Nebraska's airwaves in the month leading up to Election Day, a new political action committee joined the fray, with a familiar pocketbook behind it. With about \$4 million in contributions from Marlene Ricketts, Common Sense Nebraska sent money to two University of Nebraska regents, who sponsored ads opposing a ballot measure that would've expanded abortion access, including one featuring a slate of Husker athletes.

Marlene and her son U.S. Sen. Pete Ricketts had already spent millions supporting a competing ballot measure, hoping to keep the state's stricter 12-week abortion ban in place.

The 2024 election, especially the abortion fight, made it clear: Sen. Ricketts may have jumped from the Nebraska governor's office to the nation's capital, but he and his family are still making their mark on their home state's politics.

The family, even in incomplete records, spent far more than in any previous election. Their \$8.8 million in publicly available campaign contributions this cycle accounted for more than 9% of all political giving in Nebraska.

This recent spending jump means the Ricketts family has now spent a total of at least \$18.6 million on Nebraska political campaigns and causes in the dozen years when Pete Ricketts was running for governor, serving as governor and serving in the U.S. Senate.

"The numbers startle," said former governor and U.S. Sen. Bob Kerrey, a Democrat who noted that the Ricketts' are free to give. "At this level of giving ... they may not own Nebraska politics but they seem to have a long-term lease."

Meanwhile, filings show that Ricketts' successor, Gov. Jim Pillen, spread around comparatively little of his own money. However, Pillen confirmed to the Flatwater Free Press this week that he's tied to two PACs that spent nearly \$700,000 supporting and opposing candidates for the Nebraska Legislature.

Joe Ricketts, family patriarch and co-founder of what became TD Ameritrade, has long been active in Nebraska politics. But the family's political spending increased dramatically when Pete Ricketts ran for governor in 2014, a previous Flatwater Free Press analysis found.

The family blew by their own record for in-state spending in the 2023-24 cycle, and upped their federal spending as well.

The vast majority of the family's money this cycle came from Marlene Ricketts, Joe's wife, and went to the abortion ballot measure and Common Sense Nebraska.

Sen. Ricketts himself spent at least \$2.2 million, with half going to the ballot measure. He gave thousands to candidates for offices ranging from the State Board of Education to the Mayor of Fremont. He sent at least roughly \$298,000 to 18 candidates for the Nebraska Legislature. He funded a PAC that spent roughly another \$220,000 supporting two Republicans and opposing their Republican opponents.

Ricketts continues to lend support both financially, and also with fundraising events, door-knocking and endorsements, said Jessica Flanagan, his longtime political adviser.

"He really believes and often says conservative leadership matters, and it matters in people's lives and it matters in how the state moves forward," she said. "And he's in a position where that can be more than just words."

Gov. Pillen's giving looks very different from Ricketts' in public filings. But the current governor is still influencing Nebraska

political races – especially races for the state's legislative branch – via two PACs pooling money from deep-pocketed donors.

Pillen confirmed Wednesday that he's "very engaged" in the PACs, though neither show any direct contributions from the governor.

One of these groups, Nebraska United, reported spending at least \$472,000 opposing political candidates running against Republicans for the Legislature.

The other group, We Are Nebraska, reported spending at least \$190,000 as of late October supporting Republicans.

"I believe that we need to get people involved and get in the game," Pillen said when asked about the PACs Wednesday. "So we've been working very, very hard across the state of Nebraska to say, 'Look, it's time to step up instead of complaining and yelling and screaming at each other ... So, we're making sure that we can have an impact on getting like-minded people elected, recruiting and getting great people to stand up and serve.'"

Pillen, the founder of Pillen Family Farms, one of the country's largest pork producers, has spent far less of his own money on campaign contributions than the Ricketts family.

In the four years Pillen has been running for or serving as governor, he and his family have given about \$1.2 million in public filings, almost all to his own gubernatorial campaign.

And, according to one former state senator, Pillen has previously criticized Pete Ricketts for Ricketts' financial involvement in that state senator's reelection race.

Former Sen. Jerry Johnson, a Republican and now mayor of Wahoo, was ousted during Ricketts' 2016 bid to rid the Legislature of senators he deemed

insufficiently conservative.

Johnson told the Flatwater Free Press that Pillen, during a visit to Wahoo with the Nebraska National Guard, told him that he believes what Ricketts did in Johnson's race was "unethical."

Neither Flanagan nor Pillen's team responded to questions about Johnson's account.

Pillen did endorse in at least two Republican-on-Republican legislative races this year, landing on the opposite side from Ricketts each time.

Neither of the Pillen-associated PACs' filings show any spending in those races, appearing to steer clear of races where two Republicans were running against one another.

Pillen appointed Ricketts to the U.S. Senate in 2023. The Ricketts' spending at the federal level increased once he went to Washington D.C.

The new senator gave more than \$3.2 million during the 2023-2024 cycle in support of Republican federal candidates and causes, nearly quadrupling what then-Gov. Ricketts spent at the federal level in 2021-2022. His Senate campaign committee and joint fundraising committee together spent another \$4.1 million.

His parents Joe and Marlene, known Republican mega donors, also spent more at the federal level than ever before. As of late October, they had already given a combined \$28.9 million, making them the country's 36th biggest donors, according to The Washington Post.

As governor, Ricketts appeared to use his money to support legislative candidates who backed his agenda. Whether he can use his money to gain influence in the U.S. Senate remains to be seen, since federal races are awash in money and



With his wife by his side, Pete Ricketts was sworn in years ago as Nebraska's newest U.S. Senator. He was sworn in by Vice President Kamala Harris.

because of individual campaign contribution limits.

"At the state level, I think the money does talk," said Matthew Foster, professor at American University's School of Public Affairs. "At the federal level, it kind of washes out."

Gaining influence in the Senate, said former Nebraska Sens. Kerrey and Chuck Hagel, is about building relationships, understanding the rules and earning your colleagues' respect.

"I think he is a genuine human being who cares about Nebraska," Kerrey said of Ricketts. "He's conservative to right-wing on his conclusions. I think if people like him – which I think that they will – I think he's using that wealth to advance causes that many of them are going to agree with."

Kerrey was surprised by the Ricketts family's continued spending back home. He couldn't think of any similar examples of

such spending by a U.S. senator or his family.

"It's consistent, it's continual, it's relentless," Kerrey said. "It's like a flood, it doesn't stop. And they have impact."

Ricketts' influence in Nebraska could help amass grassroots

support to fend off primary challengers, Foster said. It's also possible, he added, that Ricketts is eyeing a future beyond the Senate.

"It will be interesting to see

See RICKETTS, Page 8 ►

## Spinning Tales

The waiting IS the hardest part right here, right now

NELIGH — "The waiting is the hardest part."

It's not something I'm wired for. Yet, it's something we all must do at some point, more often for some, less for others.

As many of you know, my wife Lynell had knee replacement done recently at a local hospital. It's only the third time she's ever been hospitalized for a procedure.

I have a checkered past myself for hospital visits (kidney stones, prostate, etc.) in recent years.

On those occasions, she's done the 'waiting.' But not this time.

Of all the bones and joints, I think the knee joint is the one which was poorly designed by God Almighty. If it wasn't for

bad knees (and too many drinks) Mickey Mantle might have hit 600 home runs. It wasn't for a gruesome knee injury that shortened his career. Chicago Bears running back Gale Sayers might have been the best ever. Name a professional sports star who retires early and more often than not it's a knee injury that ended his career.

Knees are meant to bend one way only (forward). Go the other way and it's hyper-extended and hurts like (\*#&!). It's not meant to be twisted to one side or another and, if you ever get a dislocated knee cap, it's about as bad as it gets.

Knee injuries are associated with football and basketball players. Yes, knee injuries are common in other sports, too. In Lynell's case, her right knee has been bad going back more than

20 years. She was a good athlete and, when we were younger, there wasn't anything we wouldn't try. We played tennis, co-ed softball and put on skis in both the summer and winter time. We weren't always good at what we did, but it wasn't for a lack of trying.

I think it was the winter of 2000 or 2001, we were invited by our best friends to join them on a ski trip to Colorado. They had rented a condo near Keystone and so we went.

When you are on the ski slopes they tell you to be aware of your surroundings, particularly the people in front of you. After all, if they go down, you don't want to fall over them, right?

No matter how much you prepare in advance for a week-end of skiing, the body is never in great shape for three days of intense skiing before driving hours to get home. It was the end of the first day and we were making our final run. We were about two-thirds down the hill when we stopped for a break and she said was tired and couldn't wait to get to the bottom of the hill. We started up again and it wasn't 30 yards down the hill where she caught an edge with one of the skis and went down hard. The end result? A torn ACL. She rode the ski ambulance down to the bottom of the hill.

Weeks later she went under the knife and had it repaired. The good doctor told her the hard truth. He could fix it now, but it wouldn't last. He gave her 20 years before having a full knee replacement. She got 23 years out of her bad knee before being told the cartilage was all gone and it was now bone on bone. Toss in some bone spurs to the mix and it was time to take the next step.

Anyway, I'm writing this column while sitting in the waiting room. The furniture, here and other places where I've

been, always feels stiff. I don't think they want people to feel too comfortable and they're not expected to notice because their minds are focused on a loved one who is under the knife. I can see the coffee dispensers in front of me, but it's late afternoon and maybe, just maybe, that coffee isn't the freshest. I don't know and I don't have the will power to test my theory. So, until I'm told different, I'm going to stick with my hypothesis.

Then, much to my surprise, out comes a former employee at *The Elgin Review*. Remember that weekend ice storm earlier in the month? She biffed on the ice and landed on her elbow. Her arm is in a sling as she talks, saying she's going to have to have surgery.

That's sometimes the price you pay for living in a state where every season has its time. There's only one good place, maybe two, for ice. The best place for ice is inside a glass. The second best place is on top of an injured elbow or knee.

Waiting is hard here because you never know when the doctor is going to come out and talk to you after the procedure. Sure, they do their best to estimate the time it will take, but everyone is different. So, in this instance, the laptop computer came in handy to write down these thoughts. The Christmas tree is adorned like it should be for the coming holiday. And, while the wind is blowing mightily outside, it's warm and comfortable here where I'm at, alone with these thoughts.

The late Tom Petty hit the right note with the song "The Waiting". Here, in a lonely waiting room, waiting on skilled medical people to take away the pain it's true .... "You take it on faith, you take it to the heart" that everything will turn out OK.

Still, the waiting is the hardest part.

### SPINNING TALES



Publisher  
**Dennis Morgan**

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### Kee among CVA's top applicators

Central Valley Ag (CVA) cooperative is proud to announce the recipients of its 2024 Applicator of the Year awards. Each year, CVA honors applicators for their dedication and exceptional performance throughout the growing season, with nine outstanding applicators being selected for their hard work and commitment. Among the honorees was Jeff Kee of Tilden. The awards were announced last month.

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A junior, Karson's shooting in the Madison Holiday Basketball tournament championship game helped secure the win. He averaged 24 ppg with 8 treys.

A sophomore, Mady and her teammates added 2 wins to their record last week. She averaged 6 ppg & 9 rebounds. Against LDNE, she had 4 blocks.

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## Schools

◀ FROM Page 2

(29%).

- 359 schools are "great" (40%).
- 330 schools are "good" (30%).
- 89 schools are "need support to improve" (8%).

The classifications of the 244 school districts for last year mirror the same pattern, with a greater percentage of schools — 34% — at the "good" and "needs support to improve" levels, compared to 18.5% in the 2023 report.

In total, 138 school districts maintained the same classification between 2023 and 2024, while 71 school districts decreased in classification and 35 improved. Six districts rose by two classifications and six others dropped two classifications. About 70% of school districts improved or held steady in English and science proficiency scores in grades 3-8, while the new "cut scores" in math led to lower proficiency for 57% of districts.

Nebraska Education Commissioner Brian Maher, March 8, 2024. (Zach Wendling/Nebraska Examiner)

Thirteen districts were labeled "needs support to improve": Bayard Public Schools, Columbus Public Schools, Elba Public Schools, Lewiston Consolidated Schools, Lexington Public Schools, Madison Public Schools, Nebraska City Public Schools, Niobrara Public Schools, Omaha Public Schools, South Platte Public Schools, Southern School District 1, Walthill Public Schools and Winnebago Public Schools.

Of those, Elba, Omaha, Walthill and Winnebago Public Schools remained at "needs support to improve" from last year.

Two other districts listed at that classification level last year improved. Isanti Community School rose two spots to "great," and Harvard Public Schools rose one level to "good."

### Data can guide resources

State Sen. Danielle Conrad of Lincoln, a member of the Legislature's Education Committee, said she appreciates the data for showing what's going well and where adjustments or improvements might be needed, but acknowledged it is a lot of information to digest.

Conrad said many districts and schools are showing growth and pointed out that many are holding the line as "excellent" or "good."

She noted, however, that the "needs support to improve" category is a measure of needing additional support, noting that her daughter attends a Lincoln school rated in that category. She said she knows the school has a tremendous environment, with talented and dedicated teachers.

"On paper, it seems really scary," Conrad said. "What I know in practice is that one data point doesn't tell the full story, but what I do hope comes forward from the assessment is that we really do pour time, energy, support and resources into our schools who need the most help."

State Sens. George Dungan of Lincoln, Danielle Conrad of Lincoln, Lynne Walz of Fremont and Machaela Cavanaugh of Omaha, from left, Aug. 16, 2024. (Zach Wendling/Nebraska Examiner)

State Sen. Dave Murman of Glenvil, who chairs the Education Committee, said he appreciates that the Nebraska Department of Education has a goal to increase third-grade reading proficiency to 75% by 2030.

In the most recent tests, students in grades 4-8 increased English language arts proficiency, while grade 3 scores fell slightly, from 62% to 59%.

"Literacy continues to be a priority for the Nebraska Department of Education," Maher said in a statement. "We will continue to focus resources on statewide improvement."

Murman said focusing on third-grade reading proficiency is a proper focus because it can set up a foundation for all education. He said the goal doesn't preclude striving for improvement in all grade levels or subjects, including math and science. "The better we can use our English skills, the better we'll do for the other subjects," Murman told the Nebraska Examiner.

**Prioritizing 'room for improvement'**

Murman suggested penalties for schools repeatedly listed as "additional targeted support and improvement," defined as a

school where one or more student groups are performing at or below the performance level of students in the state's lowest-performing public schools.

"Perhaps stronger supports should be provided from the state level such as replacing administrators and/or teachers," Murman said in a text. "Students and families that lack the resources to leave continually underperforming schools truly miss out on equal opportunity."

State Sen. Dave Murman of Glenvil speaks during a hearing of the Nebraska Legislature on Sept. 8, 2023. (Zach Wendling/Nebraska Examiner)

Murman also highlighted past legislative accomplishments to increase school funding, provide scholarships and stipends for new or prospective teachers, and

streamline teacher certification. Murman and Conrad said they are looking for legislative ways to improve education.

Murman noted goals to reduce truancy and form a solid Education Committee after a number of members depart because of term limits, while Conrad pointed to strengthening school funding in partnership with Gov. Jim Pillen.

"I appreciate what schools across the state do and the teachers and the parents to educate our kids," Murman said. "I've said it several times before: Nebraska does have great schools, compared to the rest of the nation especially, but that doesn't mean there's not room for improvement."

By Zach Wendling  
Nebraska Examiner



E-R photo/DMorgan

A veterans salute was held in the EPS school gymnasium at the Wolfpack's basketball games against Neligh-Oakdale in December.

## Year

◀ FROM Page 1

a check for \$7,500 to the Elgin Rescue Service.

Elgin's Anne Meis was re-elected to the Soybean Board for a three-year term. She won over Mike Korth of Randolph.

Six former pastors and more than 200 parishioners, past and present, flooded every space of Immanuel Zion (IZ) Lutheran Church Sunday, August 18, 2024 for a glorious celebration of the church's 150 years.

### September

The Cornhusker Showdown is a multi-species show put on across Nebraska where there are 10 district shows in August and the qualifying winner from those districts go to compete at a final Showdown in Wahoo, Nebraska. Sage Stoltz, age 10 of Elgin won the Northeast Nebraska district with both her breeding ewe and market lamb.

PJCC held their Homecoming Coronation Sunday night at St. Boniface Auditorium. Chosen as queen was Kaitey Schumacher, daughter of Lisa and Kevin Schumacher.

Nathan Stuhr was promoted to Major in the USMC on Sept. 2, 2024. Family and friends joined him at Kirtland Air Force Base, Albuquerque, NM.

All eyes were on the senior class at Elgin Public School Wednesday night for the crowning of Homecoming King and Queen. Crowned Homecoming King was Taylor Beckman and Queen was Chloe Henn.

Mike Donahue, founder/director of Value Up!, spoke to patrons/community about the importance of good communication with their

children in today's world. During his time in Elgin, he also spoke to EPS staff and students.

### October

Elgin fire and rescue personnel received valuable training Saturday morning near Oakdale. There, they learned and practiced motor vehicle rescues.

Three area churches reached out with a project of their own to make diapers from t-shirts. They were then shipped to Kenya last week to support families there. Thanks to the combined efforts of Immanuel Zion (IZ) Lutheran Church, rural Albion, and Shell Creek and Zion Lutheran Churches, Newman Grove, who began this service project to help those halfway around the world.

Seven Pope John XXIII Central Catholic students were mandated as lectors and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) Thursday morning, September 26 at an all-school 8:15 a.m. Mass. Father John Norman conducted the mandation. The students that were mandated were Aiden Klein, Reese Stuhr, Jovie Borer, Harlie Tyler, Landyn Veik, Camry Kittelson, and Tessa Barlow.

Elgin Public Elementary enjoyed their annual Donuts With Dads event at the school.

Last Wednesday, members of the Elgin Volunteer Fire Department and Elgin EMTs gave demonstrations to Elgin Public and Pope John Central Catholic elementary students about fire and emergency safety precautions.

The annual Life Chain was held along the highway outside

of St. Boniface Church. Many joined to pray in silence for the sanctity of life.

The Red Cross Bloodmobile was in Elgin last week. Hosted by Pope John XXIII Central Catholic School, the bloodmobile collected 40 good units.

The Wolfpack volleyball team placed second in the NVC Tournament, losing to Stuart in the championship match.

### November

Patriotism was on full display at the Veterans Day Program at Elgin Public School. Many of the elementary students waved flags during the hour long program. Giving the Veterans Day Address was U.S. Army Veteran and now retired attorney Jim Fehringer.

In their first year competing in eSports, Elgin Public School (EPS) had a team qualify for the state tournament. The students that will compete at state are Dylan Kolm, Austin Hinkle, Landon Kallhoff, Emma Kinney and Kellan Hoefler. The competition is at Midland University in Fremont.

Elgin FFA has a Junior Livestock Judging team headed to State! Kaidynce Schrad, Braelyn Martensen, Zoey Buechter and Justice Blecher placed in the top 25% out of 17 school competing last week at the District Livestock Judging Contest in Ord. They will represent Elgin FFA at state next April.

Jeremy Young will represent Ward 1 on the Elgin City Council for the next four years. The position was previously held by Jim Kittelson.

Valero Albion presented a \$20,000 donation to the Elgin Volunteer Fire Department to be used to purchase equipment.

Elgin Knights of Columbus Council 2411 and Council 7550 (Neligh) last week combined to provide the Antelope County Food Pantry with coats for Kids in area schools as part of the Knights of Columbus 'Coats For Kids' program. The presentation was made last Wednesday following the Memorial Mass and potluck supper held in Elgin.

### December

Altogether, 1,067 meals were served at the annual Thanksgiving Bazaar. Of that number, 597 were dine-in and the remainder, 470, were carry-out.

Kathy Dinslage and Kimberly Young have once again donated the profits from STNP to benefit area families who need a little extra help, especially during the holidays. They presented a \$2,450 check to Dean Schrage of Dean's Market.

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# Ricketts

◀ FROM Page 6

how he sees this: As a stepping stone, or as just the end point," he said.

In a statement, Ricketts indicated no specific political goals beyond his next election.

"I am running for reelection in 2026 to continue serving Nebraskans in the Senate where I am working to advance conservative principles, make government work better for them, and restore a foreign policy of peace through strength that keeps us safe," he said. "Fulfilling that promise, and being a good husband and father, are my only ambitions."

Both supporters and opponents of Initiative 434, which enshrined the state's stricter, 12-week abortion ban in the Nebraska Constitution, say that the Ricketts family's financial support proved crucial.

The Ricketts' gave at least \$5.1 million to the campaign, though \$1.5 million was later returned to Marlene. Money from Common Sense Nebraska, the PAC heavily funded by Marlene Ricketts, found its way to the cause as well, as the Lincoln Journal Star first reported.

A competing ballot initiative, 439, that would have greatly expanded abortion access in Nebraska narrowly failed.

"I am confident that we would've won if it wasn't for the confusion," said Allie Berry, campaign manager for Protect Our Rights, which championed 439. "And ultimately, the confusion campaign was fueled by money that the Ricketts family" gave to groups on the other side, she said.

Flanagain contended that the Ricketts family has backed ballot initiatives that give likeminded Nebraskans a voice.

"As far as I can tell, without the Ricketts family we would have lost the pro-life ballot measure," she said. "There would be no voter ID, and Ernie Chambers would have abolished the death penalty."

*The Flatwater Free Press is Nebraska's first independent, nonprofit newsroom focused on investigations and feature stories that matter.*

## Summit Contracting Donates Res-Q-Tube to CVA for Grain Safety Education

Summit Contracting, a premier agricultural construction service provider in South Dakota, Nebraska, and Iowa, is proud to announce its donation of a Res-Q-Tube, a specialized grain rescue device, to Central Valley Ag Coop (CVA). This vital equipment will enhance CVA's ability to conduct first-hand demonstrations and training sessions focused on grain safety.

CVA is committed to improving grain safety across rural communities in Nebraska, Kansas, and Iowa through its grain engulfment demonstration trailer. This mobile training unit allows CVA to bring in-person demonstrations to the agricultural communities they serve, raising awareness of the hazardous environments created by grain bins. The training program offers volunteers a unique opportunity to experience how quickly a person can become engulfed in grain, emphasizing the importance of safety awareness. CVA has scheduled several events aimed at training first responders and educating youth and agricultural communities about preventing grain entrapment. These events will also provide training on the correct procedures for handling grain entrapments in emergency situations.

Since the introduction of their demonstration trailer in May 2024, CVA has been borrowing a grain rescue tube from a local fire department. This arrangement has left the fire department without the necessary equipment for potential emergencies. Recognizing this need, Summit Contracting has partnered with CVA to provide them with their own Res-Q-Tube, enabling more effective and consistent grain entrapment education opportunities.

"Having the proper equipment to continue our grain safety education efforts is crucial," said Joel Wochner of CVA. "This donation

## Bird flu cases found in Lancaster, Sarpy counties

LINCOLN — The Nebraska Department of Agriculture, working with USDA and its Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, has announced five cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza in Nebraska poultry flocks — four of them this month.

The two latest cases were found in a small backyard chicken flock in Sarpy County and a mixed backyard flock in Lancaster County.

The previous two from December were detected in a commercial turkey flock in Nemaha County and one in a small backyard chicken flock in Dodge County, state ag officials report. The earlier case in Gage County came from a commercial flock.

State Veterinarian Dr. Roger Dudley had said he expected to see more instances of the "highly contagious virus" because it was circulating in wild birds, commercial and backyard flocks.

He urged poultry producers to monitor their birds because the avian fluspreads easily through nasal and eye secretions, along with food, water and waste.

Ag officials said signs of avian flu in poultry include drinking less water, eating less, producing fewer eggs, producing soft or oddly shaped eggs, coughing, wheezing, sneezing and diarrhea.

"Knowing the signs and symptoms of HPAI and continuing to practice good biosecurity measures helps prevent the spread of this disease," Dudley said in a statement.

# PUBLIC NOTICES

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## NOTICE TO BIDDERS

### ROOFING ANTELOPE COUNTY MUSEUM PROJECT

#### NOTICE - Roofing Antelope County Museum

The Antelope County Board of Commissioners will accept sealed bids for the reroofing of the Antelope County Museum Building, which is located at 410 L Street, Neligh being a part

of Antelope County Museum Complex. Bids will be accepted until 9:45 AM on Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and shall be submitted in a sealed envelope with the wording "Bid for Roof-Museum" in the lower left-hand corner. Bids may be addressed to the Antelope

County Clerk, 501 Main Street, PO Box 26, Neligh, NE 68756-0026 or dropped off at the County Clerk's Office. Bids will be opened at 9:45AM on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025 during the Board of Commissioner Meeting, in the Commissioner's Meeting Room of the Courthouse

Annex. For bidding information please contact the Antelope County Clerk at (402) 887-4410. The Antelope County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids. PUBLISH: January 1 and 8, 2025 ZNEZ

## Neligh WIC, immunization clinic to be Thursday

Northeast Nebraska Community Action Partnership will hold the Neligh WIC and Immunization clinic on Thursday January 2, from 10:30am to 2:30pm at the American Legion-115 W. 3rd Street Neligh. For an appointment or for more information regarding the WIC or Immunization Programs please call (402) 385-6300.

NENCAP's WIC Program provides nutrition education and supplemental foods to income eligible pregnant, breast-feeding, or postpartum women, infants, and children to age 5 years. Find a clinic near you at [signupwic.com](http://signupwic.com).

NENCAP's Immunization Program provides vaccines to adults and children following the recommended schedule from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and the Center for Disease Control. Covid-19 vaccines available for

those 6 months and older are available at no cost. The immunization clinic can serve both clients with and without health insurance.

Northeast Nebraska Community Action Partnership (NENCAP), headquartered in Pender, NE, is one of nine Community Action Agencies in Nebraska. NENCAP manages several different programs as determined by identified needs of residents in the 14-county service area. The Agency serves over 10,000 clients a year due to successful outreach efforts. Northeast Nebraska Community Action Partnership (NENCAP) programs include the Commodity Supplemental Food Program; Family Services; Immunization; Weatherization; Head Start; Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition; Early Intervention Services Coordination; Healthy Families.

## Improving oversight eyed as 'hallmark issue' of legislative session

KEARNEY, Neb. — Legislative leaders are embracing potential changes to state law meant to reinforce their oversight role after Nebraska's top prosecutor last year questioned the constitutional scope of two legislatively empowered investigators.

The in-progress proposal, sitting at about 126 pages, would create a formal legislative division of oversight over the state's other branches of government. It would cement the Legislature's watchdogs for child welfare and corrections, the "inspectors general" of the two areas, underneath sections of law governing general legislative authority. The changes were outlined Friday at a retreat for the full Legislature in Kearney before lawmakers reconvene Jan. 8 for a 90-day session. The watchdogs investigate incidents or complaints about cases largely handled by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and Nebraska Department of Correctional Services, such as allegations of child sexual abuse or deaths of inmates in state care.

"This is like the beginning," State Sen. John Arch of La Vista, speaker of the Legislature, said Friday. "We're trying to lay out some foundational blocks and reorganize for the future."

The new division would work under a new Legislative Oversight Committee, which would replace a different committee and appoint a division director.

The committee's nine members would be:

- The speaker of the Legislature.
- Chair of the Executive Board (the number-two member of the Legislature).
- Chairs of the Appropriations, Health and Human Services and Judiciary Committees.
- Four at-large state senators.

## Elgin Community Center Menus

**Monday, January 6:** Chicken & rice casserole, broccoli, pears, bread/butter, milk.

**Tuesday, January 7:** Lasagna soup, lettuce salad, cottage cheese, pineapple, garlic stick, milk.

**Wednesday, January 8:** Fried chicken, mashed potatoes & gravy, peas, applesauce, bread/butter, milk.

**Thursday, January 9:** Cream chicken over biscuits, mixed vegetables, blushing pears, bread/butter, milk.

**Friday, January 10:** Hamburger, French fries, baked beans, strawberry/peaches mix, bread/butter, milk.

(All meals served with bread & butter.)

Menus are provided by the Community Center and are subject to change.

Suggested price is \$7 per meal for persons 60 years of age and older.

Under 60 is \$10.00. Serving starts at 11:45 a.m. and ends around 12:15 p.m.

Meals are served Monday thru Friday.

Takeout starting at 11:30 a.m. Please call 843-5757 by 9:30 a.m. to reserve a meal. for that day.

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## Take hot chocolate to the next level

People tend to think of sipping ice cream floats in the middle of summer when temperatures are soaring. Ice cream floating in a bubbling base of cola or root beer can be a welcome treat on a hot day. However, floats can be just as delicious when the weather chills, particularly when ice cream enhances rich and decadent hot chocolate.

For this "Hot Chocolate Float" from "Chocolate: Over 100 Temptingly-Tasty Dishes" (Love Food) by the Love Food editors, coconut- and chocolate-flavored scoops of ice cream bob and melt in creamy hot chocolate. Feel free to use your favorite flavors of ice cream to make this recipe your own, and you can even make this drink a boozy version with the inclusion of a shot of flavored vodka.



Pour the milk into a saucepan. Break the chocolate into pieces and add to the saucepan with the sugar. Stir over low heat until the chocolate has melted, the sugar has dissolved and the mixture is smooth. Remove the saucepan from the heat.

Put 1 scoop of coconut ice cream into each of 4 heatproof glasses, top with a scoop of chocolate ice cream, then repeat the layers.

Pour the chocolate flavored milk into the glasses, top with whipped cream, and serve immediately.

## Hot Chocolate Float

Serves 4

- 2 cups milk
- 8 ounces semisweet chocolate
- 2 tablespoons superfine sugar
- 8 scoops coconut ice cream
- 8 scoops semisweet chocolate ice cream
- Whipped cream, to decorate

## Over and under feeding - get a forage test first

### IT'S ALL ABOUT BEEF



Beef Systems Asst. Ext. Educator Ben Beckman

Open winters can mean grazing opportunities late into the season. However, when animals can't forage, hay is often the feed of choice to get our animals through. While an invaluable feed resource, the cost of getting a herd through the winter can be substantial. One of the easiest ways to overspend feeding is by providing animals more than they need. On the flip side, under-feeding can lead to thin cows and down the road calving issues and low conception rates. Neither one is desirable. So how do we make sure to get animals exactly what they need? The first step is getting a forage test. When we get tests back, I'd wager that there is going to be

some differences in the different cuttings and types of hay you have on hand. While it might seem minor, even as little of a difference as 2% in crude protein content can have a huge impact. Let's take a hay that tests at 9% crude protein and compare it with one at 7%. A 1,300 lb. spring calving cow in her second trimester needs about 1.6 lb. of crude protein on a dry matter basis in her diet daily to meet her nutritional needs. For our 9% protein hay, this cow needs to consume 17.8 lb. dry matter of hay daily. Feeding the 7% protein hay, this jumps to 22.9 lb. While 5 lbs. doesn't seem like that much, spread that out over a herd of 100

animals and that's 500 lbs. dry matter daily (555 lb. as fed). If you take it one step further and drop the hay to 5% crude protein, that same cow now needs to consume 32 lb. of hay on a dry matter basis daily. That's now 14 additional lbs. on a dry matter basis needed with a change of just 4% protein. Again spread that out over a 100 cow herd and we need 1,400 additional lbs. of hay on a dry matter basis (1554 lb. as fed). Given slower digestibility with a low quality feed, it's probably likely the cow can't even eat enough hay to meet this requirement. At this point, now we need to begin adding in an additional supplement earlier than we probably planned to keep the cow from losing condition. To look at this another way, good quality grass hay is going for around \$90 per ton according to the USDA. Even at only a 2% drop in protein from 9 to

7%, the additional hay is going to cost the 100 cow herd an additional \$749.25 each month. That's a pretty nice chunk of change that could be spent elsewhere, especially when the cost of running a forage sample is usually less than \$20. If you need help figuring out exactly what that diet should look like, bring your feed tests in to any livestock extension educator and we'd be happy to help walk through it with you. So, this winter, take some time to look at your feeding plan, especially if the snow starts to fly. Feeding animals what they need can keep the heard happy and healthy and your pocket book full. - Ben Beckman is a beef systems Extension Educator serving north-east Nebraska. He is based out of the Cedar County Extension office in Hartington. You can reach him by phone: (402) 254-6821 or email: ben.beckman@unl.edu

## Crossword Puzzle

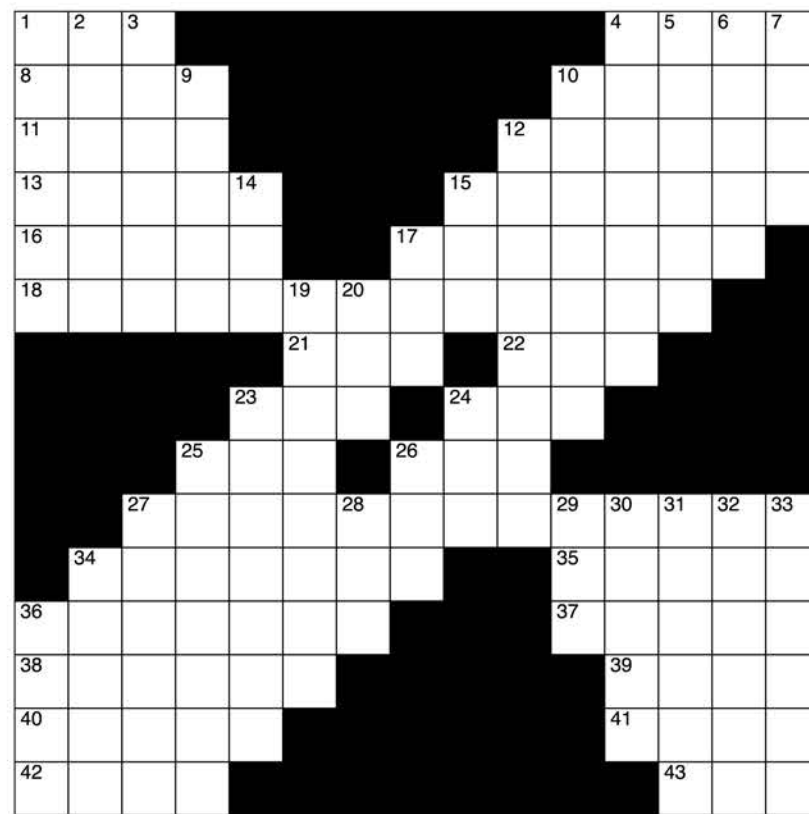
### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Americans "uncle"
- 4. Chair
- 8. Ancient kingdom
- 10. Egyptian city
- 11. Alaskan glacier
- 12. One from Somalia
- 13. Ancient alphabets
- 15. Relating to vocabulary
- 16. Small mongrels
- 17. Natural settings
- 18. Weekend entertainments
- 21. Line from which light seemingly streams
- 22. Your own private code
- 23. Swiss river
- 24. Satisfaction
- 25. A person's brother or sister
- 26. Folk singer DiFranco
- 27. The Blonde Bombshell
- 34. Kids' school project
- 35. Bluish greens
- 36. Classifying
- 37. Cube-shaped
- 38. Choo-choos
- 39. Indian religious god of dissolution
- 40. French department

- 41. Leak into gradually
- 42. Foundation
- 43. Midway between south and southeast

### CLUES DOWN

- 1. Counterbalancing debt
- 2. In slow tempo
- 3. Glamorous city
- 4. Japanese lute
- 5. Makes law
- 6. Informative book
- 7. Animal's body part
- 9. American playwright
- 10. Blood poisoning
- 12. Angels
- 14. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
- 15. Written account
- 17. Unwelcome pest
- 19. Saddle horses
- 20. Type of gibbon
- 23. Delta is one
- 24. NE Massachusetts cape
- 25. Soup cracker
- 26. Yes vote
- 27. Muddy ground
- 28. Physics apparatus (abbr.)
- 29. Type of drug



- 30. German city
- 31. Animal disease
- 32. Martini ingredients

- 33. Get away
- 34. Spanish municipality
- 36. Thrust a knife into

## Celebrate the Chinese New Year with deep-fried wontons

The Chinese New Year is a unique celebration with a global footprint. While many of the more awe-inspiring celebrations may occur within China, that doesn't mean there aren't ways to commemorate this unique event elsewhere. Celebrations can even take place at home, where individuals can whip up homemade Chinese fare to lend

their festivities a more authentic feel. This Chinese New Year, those who want to bring this unique event into their homes can try the following recipe for "Deep-Fried Pork Wontons" courtesy of Lines+Angles.

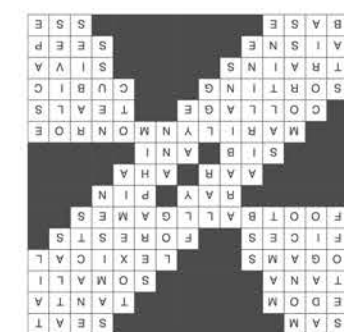
### Deep-Fried Pork Wontons

For the filling:

- 7 ounces minced pork
  - 2 spring onions
  - 1 green chili, deseeded
  - 1 tablespoon grated ginger
  - 1 garlic clove, minced
  - 2 tablespoon fish sauce
  - 1 tablespoon lime juice
  - 32 square wonton wrappers
  - Vegetable oil, for frying
- To serve:  
Mixed leaf salad; cabbage, lettuce and coriander  
Sweet and sour sauce

- 1. Mix together the ingredients for the filling, stirring in one direction only.
- 2. Place double layers of wonton wrappers in front of you in a diamond shape. Place a little of the filling on the bottom half of the dough. Fold the bottom corner of dough over the filling and roll it once. Take the outside corners and bring them together, sealing with a little water. Stand the wontons on their flat bases and gently separate the two top flaps. Repeat

with the remaining wrappers and filling.  
3. Heat about 4 inches oil in a deep pan until gently bubbling, then fry the wontons in batches for 3 to 4 minutes or until golden brown and cooked through. Drain on paper towels then serve on beds of the mixed leaves with the sweet and sour sauce alongside.  
Tip: This recipe may also be steamed or boiled.



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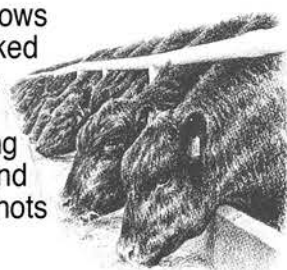
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**Madison Holiday Tournament Champions**

E-R photo/DMorgan

Defeating rival Riverside for the second time in December, the EPPJ boys basketball team claimed the championship trophy at the Madison Holiday Basketball Tournament. Playing Saturday evening, the Wolfpack defeated the Chargers 60 to 56. Members of the team are (l-r): student manager Carter Selting, Karson Kallhoff, Kellan Hoefer, Taylor Beckman, Dylan Kolm, Jarek Erickson, Evin Pelster, student managers Braxtyn Eisenhauer and Cael Bottorf. Back row: Ass't. Coach Piton Hoefer, student manager Jayvin Erickson, Ticen Sparr, Joseph McNally, Michael Selting, Max Henn, Trey Rittscher, Brayden Burenheide, student manager Garrett Busteded, Head Coach Matt Euse and Ass't. Coach Kyle Kallhoff.

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**WRESTLING**

**BOYS VARSITY**

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 Jan. 11 @ Summerland ..... 10:00  
 Jan. 17 @ Sumner-Eddyville-Miller ..... 12:00

**GIRLS VARSITY**

Jan. 9 @ Norm Manstedt Inv. (Columbus) ..... 8:00  
 Jan. 13 @ Summerland ..... 2:00  
 Jan. 16 @ Ord ..... 1:00

**BOYS & GIRLS BASKETBALL**

**VARSITY/JV**

Jan. 3 vs. North Central (EPS) ..... 4:00  
 Jan. 9 vs. St. Mary's (G, EPS) ..... 6:15  
 Jan. 11 @ Bloomfield ..... 2:15  
 Jan. 14 @ Fullerton ..... 4:30  
 Jan. 17 vs. Stuart (PJ) ..... 4:00

**JUNIOR HIGH**

Jan. 6 @ CWC ..... 3:30  
 Jan. 9 vs. St. Mary's (G, EPS) ..... 4:00  
 Jan. 21 vs. Riverside (PJ) ..... 3:00

*next week...  
 Classes Resume!*

**SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

Jan. 4 Little Kids Wrestling Tournament @ St. Boniface Auditorium  
 Jan. 7 Elgin schools classes resume • Jr High Quiz Bowl @ Stuart  
 Jan. 13 Boone Central Choral Clinic Concert  
 Jan. 16 PJCC NHS Induction  
 Jan. 20 No School - teacher inservices

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# Wolfpack Sports

## The story remains the same - EPPJ girls win Madison Holiday Tournament again Wolfpack defense holds Lady Dragons to just 11 first half points

MADISON — School officials here may wish to rename their holiday tournament. For the seventh consecutive year, Elgin Public/Pope John claimed the championship trophy at the Madison Holiday Tournament, defeating the host school 55 to 29.

On Saturday, Coach Randy Eisenhauer followed the same script as in past years and it worked to perfection. Pressure defense and an attacking offense meant another championship trophy for the trophy case.

"I wanted to come out and put a lot of pressure on them right away," Eisenhauer said. "I thought our girls did really well, executing both presses for us and getting out to that lead."

EPPJ scored the first 11 points of the game before Madison's Janaya Parks got on the scoreboard with a trey. Then, over the final five minutes of the first quarter, EPPJ went on an 11 to three run. Over that span, Braelyn Martinsen had five points while Kayton Zwingman and Kate Furstenau each had two

points. Seven Wolfpack players scored in the second quarter as EPPJ expanded their lead to 36 to 11 at halftime. Seeing that many players able to score is something Coach Eisenhauer is particularly proud of this season.

"I could have a different leading scorer out of all my starters (in any game)," he said. "All five of them can shoot for us."

Callie Heithoff started out the third quarter with a trey, but the team didn't score another field goal til Elizabeth Moser scored on a put back with 2:46 left in the quarter.

Kierstyn Eisenhauer came off the bench to score on a three-point play for the team's final points of the quarter as the Wolf-

pack led by 23 points, 46 to 23. One of Coach Eisenhauer's goals in the game was to score more points 'in the paint.' "I wanted to see more post touches. That's not saying the post has to get it. Our guards have to get to the paint (to score) or kick out for open three's."

Furstenau's trey opened the fourth quarter and Martinsen had back-to-back baskets before reserves took over for the final five minutes of the game. Moser closed out the game with free throws for the team's eighth victory.

"I'm pretty happy where we're at right now," Eisenhauer said about the team's 8-1 record.

**EPPJ 55, Madison 29**  
Madison.....6 5 12 6 — 29

Wolfpack.....22 14 10 9 — 55  
Wolfpack — Kayton Zwingman 1-3 1-2 3, Kinley Druke 0-2 0-0 0, Elizabeth Moser 1-4 2-4 4, Trissa Russell 1-4 0-0 2, Braelyn Martinsen 5-11 3-4 14, Callie Heithoff 4-6 0-0 9, Kate Furstenau 6-10 0-2 15, Kierstyn Eisenhauer 1-4 1-1 3, Mady Kurpgeweit 1-7 2-4 4, Dannyka Smidt 0-0 0-2 0. Team totals: 20-51 9-19 54. Three-point shots — Wolfpack 5-17 (Kate Furstenau 3, Braelyn Martinsen 1, Callie Heithoff 1). Madison team totals: 9-46 9-16 29. Three-point shots — Madison 2-22. Team statistics: Rebounds — Wolfpack 40 (Mady Kurpgeweit 11), Dragons 25. Assists — Wolfpack 12 (Kate Furstenau 4), Dragons 3. Steals — Wolfpack 20 (Braelyn Martinsen 5), Dragons 10. Turn-



E-R photo/DMorgan

Who says basketball isn't a tough sport? Trissa Russell's defensive pressure ended up with the ball bouncing off her forehead in Saturday's championship game. She and her teammates are doing whatever it takes to win games this season.

## EPPJ defeats LDNE 61 to 35

MADISON — They had no chance.

Lyons-Decatur Northeast (LDNE) succumbed to the Wolfpack's mighty defensive effort Friday afternoon, falling 61 to 35 in the opening round of the Madison Holiday Tournament.

Picking up their fifth victory of the season, EPPJ outscored the Cougars in all four quarters to leave no doubt who was the better team on this day.

Junior Karson Kallhoff sparked the Wolfpack early on with seven points as the Wolfpack took a 17 to 12 lead.

LDNE attempted to make a game of it, keeping pace with the Wolfpack in the second quarter and trailed by just seven points, 30 to 23, at halftime. Kallhoff finished the game with 21 points, connecting on nine of 16 field goal attempts.

Then, after halftime, the Wolfpack pulled away, giving the Cougars no chance to make it a game.

The Wolfpack responded with their best half of the season. The offense put 31 points on the board.

At the other end of the court, EPPJ limited LDNE to just 12 points.

With Kallhoff connecting from outside, Jarek Erickson made his mark inside. He finished

with 17 points, going seven for seven from the free throw line in the game.

Freshman Max Henn had his best game of the season, scoring nine points. Kellan Hoefer added eight.

EPPJ dominated the boards, pulling down 31 rebounds compared to just 24 by LDNE. Erickson led the way with 11 rebounds to complete another double-double.

Senior Dylan Kolm led the team in steals with three.

**EPPJ 61, LDNE 35**

Cougars.....12 11 6 6 — 35  
Wolfpack.....17 13 13 18 — 61  
Wolfpack — Kellan Hoefer 3-7 0-0 8, Michael Selting 0-2 0-0 0, Joseph McNally 0-0 0-0 0, Karson Kallhoff 9-16 0-0 21, Evin Pelster 1-1 0-0 2, Jarek Erickson 5-15 7-7 17, Taylor Beckman 0-2 0-0 0, Max Henn 4-4 1-2 9, Dylan Kolm 2-10 0-4 4, Trey Rittscher 0-2 0-0 0. Team totals: 24-59 8-9 61. Three-point shots — Wolfpack 5-15 (Karson Kallhoff 3, Kellan Hoefer 2). LDNE team totals: 14-43 1-7 35. Three-point shots — LDNE 6-16.

Team statistics: Rebounds — Wolfpack 31 (Jarek Erickson 11, Karson Kallhoff 5), LDNE 24. Assists — Wolfpack 9 (Karson Kallhoff 4, Jarek Erickson 4). Steals — Wolfpack 9 (Dylan Kolm 3), LDNE 1. Turnovers — Wolfpack 8, LDNE 21.

## LDNE no match for EPPJ at tourney

MADISON — Balanced scoring gave Elgin Public-Pope John the edge Friday as they defeated Lyons-Decatur Northeast 49 to 33 in the opening round of the Madison Holiday Girls Basketball Tournament.

The Wolfpack's five starters (Kayton Zwingman, Braelyn Martinsen, Kate Furstenau, Callie Heithoff and Mady Kurpgeweit) scored seven or more points in the game.

EPPJ jumped out to a 28 to 14 lead at halftime, then extended their lead to 46 to 20 after three quarters. In

each of the first three quarters, the Cougars were held to single-digit scoring.

The Cougars found something to build on as they outscored the Wolfpack 13 to three over the final eight minutes of the game.

Furstenau, a senior, led the way for the Wolfpack, sinking three treys and finishing with 13 points. Martinsen was the only other player to score in double-digits for EPPJ, finishing with 10.

Kurpgeweit and Martinsen each pulled down seven rebounds in the game. Kurpgeweit blocked four shots in the game. Furstenau dished out a team-high three assists while Heithoff led the team in steals with six.

**EPPJ 49, LDNE 33**

Cougars.....7 7 6 13 — 33  
Wolfpack.....11 17 18 3 — 49  
Wolfpack — Kayton Zwingman 3-8 2-3 8, Kinley Druke 0-0 0-0 0, Elizabeth Moser 0-7 0-0 0, Trissa Russell 1-3 1-2 3, Braelyn Martinsen 5-15 0-0 10, Callie Heithoff 4-11. 0-0 8, Kate Furstenau 3-8 4-6 13, Kierstyn Eisenhauer 0-0 0-0 0, Mady Kurpgeweit 2-9 2-5 7, Dannyka Smidt 0-0 0-0 0. Team totals: 18-61 9-16 49. Three-point shots — Wolfpack 4-12 (Kate Furstenau 3, Mady Kurpgeweit 1). Cougars team totals: 12-37 8-12 33. Three-point shots — Cougars 1-4.

Team statistics: Rebounds — Wolfpack 32 (Mady Kurpgeweit 7, Braelyn Martinsen 7), Cougars 32. Assists — Wolfpack 9 (Kate Furstenau 3), Cougars 8. Steals — Wolfpack 25 (Callie Heithoff 6), Cougars 6. Turnovers — Wolfpack 18, Cougars 41.



E-R photo/DMorgan

Coach Randy Eisenhauer comes off the bench as Kayton Zwingman and Mady Kurpgeweit team up to pressure Madison's Giselle Moran. EPPJ had 20 steals and forced the Dragons to commit 25 turnovers in Saturday's game.

## Wolfpack hold off Chargers to win holiday tourney

MADISON — "That team's tough to beat." Wolfpack Coach Matt Euse told his team that in the locker room just moments after EPPJ defeated Riverside 60 to 56 in the boys championship game of the Madison Holiday Basketball Tournament.

Building a 12-point lead in the first half, the Wolfpack held off a second half comeback by the Chargers to claim their second victory over Riverside this season "It's just always a

rivalry when we play them," Karson Kallhoff said about the Chargers. In the season opener, Kallhoff had seven 3's against Riverside. On Saturday, he had five, all in the first half.

Kallhoff and senior Kellan Hoefer combined for five treys in the first quarter as EPPJ jumped out to a 21 to 10 lead. Also connecting from behind the arc was Michael Selting. Then, in the second quarter, Jarek Erickson and Dylan Kolm found

the basket before Hoefer closed out the first half with his second trey for a 32 to 20 lead.

Momentum switched sides in the third quarter as Dane Schalk had eight in the quarter.

After a Kallhoff 2-pointer to start the fourth quarter, Taylor Beckman grabbed an offensive rebound, then connected in the paint to boost the lead to 49 to 40. It was Beckman's only basket, but one of the key plays in the game, Euse said. "That was absolutely huge," Euse said about Beckman's 10-footer. "He doesn't let anything faze him."

Late in the game, Kallhoff had a couple of big drives to the basket and hit some free throws to hold off Riverside. "I think it was time to start driving because they were going to close out on me." He finished the game with 27 points to lead all scorers.

Erickson closed out the game with six points (4-4 free throws).

**EPPJ 60, Riverside 56**

Chargers.....8 12 20 16 — 56  
Wolfpack.....21 11 13 15 — 60  
Wolfpack — Kellan Hoefer 2-6 3-3 9, Michael Selting 2-2 0-0 5, Karson Kallhoff 8-14 6-8 27, Jarek Erickson 3-7 4-4 10, Taylor Beckman 1-1 0-0 2, Max Henn 2-3 0-0 4, Dylan Kolm 1-2 1-2 3. Team totals: 19-35 14-17 60. Three-point shots — Wolfpack 8-20 (Karson Kallhoff 5, Kellan Hoefer 2, Michael Selting 1). Riverside team totals: 23-51 4-4 56. Three-point shots — 6-17. Team statistics: Rebounds — Wolfpack 21 (Jarek Erickson 6, Dylan Kolm 6), Chargers 11. Assists — Wolfpack 12 (Karson Kallhoff 4, Jarek Erickson 4). Turnovers — Wolfpack 17, Chargers 5.



E-R photo/DMorgan

Jarek Erickson 'wanted it more' on this play as he tried to steal the ball away during Saturday's game against Riverside.



E-R photo/DMorgan

In the first half, freshman Max Henn came up big with this blocked shot. He finished with four points in the game.

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