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Tornadic Terror

Three days of severe weather leave area, residents unsettled

By MICHAEL CARNES
Of The Herald

The memory of last fall's tornado is still a fresh one for many Wayne-area residents, a memory that surely has been brought back a few times in the past few days.

Residents in just about every part of the three-county area have been under the gun in recent days as Mother Nature unleashed a series of dangerous severe weather upon the area, weather that included tornadoes, lightning and heavy rains that have left farms and homes either flooded, damaged or destroyed.

The action got started Saturday evening when western Wayne County and Cedar County experienced strong thunderstorms and a number of funnel clouds that hovered south and west of Carroll. That storm didn't produce any tornadoes in the county, but dumped a tremendous amount of precipitation on the area, with some residents in the three county area reporting in excess of six inches of rain over a 24-hour period into early Sunday morning.

Sunday was a day of rest from the severe weather, but activity picked up again on Monday, leading to the most devastating day of severe weather this area has seen since last October's tornado that struck Wayne.

A series of tornadoes dropped in Stanton County, then moved northeast into Wayne and Dixon counties late Monday afternoon. Two of the four tornadoes devastated the town of Pilger, located about 17 miles south of Wayne, while a third tornado tore through the east half of Wayne County, damaging or destroying an estimated 30 rural homes, farms and feedlot operations, as well as taking hundreds of head of livestock.

Randy Larson, the District 1 commissioner on the Wayne County Board, was one of the many residents south and east of Wakefield who were in the path of the storm. He told The Wayne Herald that a tree hit his house and some of his center pivots had been tipped over, but the damage he and his family experienced paled in comparison to that of his neighbors.

"It looks a lot like what we saw in Wayne last fall," he said. "It took everything in its path. It's a major disaster. That's what it is, and that's what we're dealing with."

While the Pilger tornadoes claimed two lives and injured more than a dozen others, the Wakefield storm left three injured, two of which were taken to area hospitals.

One of the estimated 30 families in eastern Wayne County who were hit by Monday's storm suffered a second weather-related blow in less than a year.

Monday's round of tornadoes put Providence Medical Center into a "code yellow" situation, which had the hospital prepare for any mass casualties that came from Monday's storms. Hospital officials said that they treated at least three people who were brought in from the Pilger storm by area rescue units, and nurses from the hospital performed triage at both the Pilger and Wakefield-area locations.

"For the second time since October of 2013, Providence Medical Center called a Code Yellow (multiple casualty incident) due to local tornados and potential catastrophic recovery," said Tom Lee, Providence Medical Center's CEO. "An additional 75 staff members and physicians reported to the hospital as Incident Command was set up, everyone ready to treat whatever injuries might arrive."

"In the end, PMC received three patients from Pilger, all three sustained injuries from the devastating tornado. Also, two ambulances and crews were sent to assist in triage during the search and recovery stage in Pilger and Wakefield. The physicians and staff at PMC live the mission every day, and it was even more evident Monday night. I am proud of everyone who works here, they make a difference every day."

Last fall, Ron Krusemark's son, Matt, and his family lost their

**More Storm Photos
Page 3**



(Photo by Michael Carnes)

People living in the three-county area may have felt like they were under siege by Mother Nature as severe weather slammed Wayne, Cedar and Dixon counties over a four-day period. On Tuesday night, this tornado touched down north of Laurel, coming one day after tornadoes ripped through rural homes in southeastern Wayne County.



(Photos by Michael Carnes and Clara Osten)

The John Sandahl farm southeast of Wakefield (above) was one of more than 30 homes in eastern Wayne County that were devastated or destroyed by a tornado that ripped through the area late Monday afternoon. (right) Friends and family of Brandon and Staci Kai look through the rubble left behind on their property southeast of Wakefield.

See TERROR, Page 3A



(Photo by Clara Osten)

Sand Creek Post & Beam's Len Dickson shared a story about what he and his wife, Jule Goeller were thinking about rebuilding their business in the days after last fall's tornado during a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the business Friday. Also pictured is Wayne Mayor Ken Chamberlain.

Sand Creek Post & Beam swings open its doors again

Goeller: An obligation to 'keep ball rolling'

By MICHAEL CARNES
Of The Herald

Len Dickson said he remembered driving "way too fast" from his home south of Wayne to check out the damage left behind by an EF-4 tornado that destroyed his family business.

When he got to the site where he and his wife, Jule Goeller, had built Sand Creek Post & Beam, everything was gone, building and product was all over the place and some of the distinguishing characteristics of the area were suddenly missing.

One thing that wasn't, though, was the company's willingness to roll up their sleeves and get back to work. And, eight months later, the company was able to cut the ceremonial red ribbon announcing the completion of rebuilding their business in the tornado-stricken area where it has stood for the past 10 years.

"It's been an eye-opening experience," he told the reporter-estimated crowd of about 100 people gathered in the southern structure of the two-building setup Friday morning. "There has been a tremendous amount of support, and . . . the work level and commitment has been incredible and I can't say enough how much I appreciate that."

Goeller said the Oct. 4, 2013 tornado was a real challenging situation for her and her husband.

"It's funny how life throws you a curve sometimes, and Oct. 4 was a curve for a lot of us," she told those in attendance. "But one of the things we never thought about after the tornado was 'Should we keep the company going?' We had an obligation to our employees and our customers and our community, and we asked ourselves what we were going to do, as soon as we can, to make sure we keep the ball rolling. That was our main goal from day one, and it's so nice to see how everything has come together."

Goeller's and Dickson's commitment to rebuilding Sand Creek Post & Beam was not lost on Wayne's mayor, Ken Chamberlain, who praised the family for their efforts and the spirit they showed in the aftermath of last fall's devastating storm.

"When the tornado came through, I had struggled with a lot of things, and I met with Len and Jule and talked with them, and that energy and spirit was still there and it gave me a lot of strength and energy to see that," he said. "To know that their lumber was spread for miles and their product and buildings were destroyed, it didn't destroy their company. To see what you've come up with in eight short months is just phenomenal."

More photos from recent area storms



(Photo courtesy Sandra Cross)

A ditch in Laurel runs full of water that was left behind from heavy rains that fell in the area Saturday evening.



(Photo courtesy Sandy Otte)

Sandy Otte was in his house and took this photo of the tornado that struck south and east of Wakefield on Monday afternoon.



(Photo by Clara Osten)

Major damage was done to many farm homes along the tornado's path south of Wakefield.



(Photo by Clara Osten)

A new garage and two vehicles were not able to survive the tornado that destroyed the property of Jason Barelman and Mark Moser southeast of Wakefield.



(Photo courtesy Josh Sievers)

The Dominator weather-chasing vehicle made a gas stop in Wayne Monday before heading out to chase severe weather in the area.



(Photo courtesy Brian Kesting)

This is some of the water that flooded an area north of Carroll after heavy rains hit the area Saturday.



(Photo by Michael Carnes)

This wall cloud made folks in Carroll and Cedar County nervous for a spell early Saturday evening. It dropped a ton of rain and some rotation was seen, but no tornado was reported with this storm.



(Photo by Clara Osten)

Rubble was all that remained of the Hilda Pearson home southeast of Wakefield after Monday's tornado.

Terror

From Page 1A
home located south of Wayne in the Oct. 4, 2013 tornado. On Monday, both he and Matt's cousin, Dale, were in the path of the tornado that hit eastern Wayne County. No injuries were reported at either of the Krusemark residences.

While the storm didn't directly hit the city of Wayne, the city experienced a round of severe wind and heavy rain that knocked out power in the area for a little more than an hour. The city ran on its own generators until Northeast Nebraska Public Power officials were able to do their repair work.

The Red Cross set up a shelter for displaced tornado victims at Wisner-Pilger High School, and volunteer efforts to help with cleanup in Pilger began Wednesday morning. Wakefield city and Wayne County officials worked with emergency managers from Wayne, Cedar, Dixon and Thurston counties, along with Winnebago's emergency manager, to set up volunteer support for those in eastern Wayne County and southern Dixon County Tuesday afternoon. Volunteer cleanup efforts continue in both areas at press time.

On Tuesday morning, the Wayne County Commissioners held a special meeting in the Wakefield Fire Hall and approved a declaration of a state of emergency for the county. The declaration authorized the expenditure of emergency funds, in-

voled mutual aid agreements and allowed the county to apply to the state for assistance from the Governor's Emergency Fund.

The board also received several offers of assistance from the city of Wayne and Wayne State College, which offered the use of empty dorm rooms on campus if they are needed. Volunteer centers were to be set up at the Wakefield Fire Hall, as well as the Wayne Community Activity Center to help move volunteer help to both the Wakefield and Pilger areas.

While residents to the south and east were dealing with the aftermath of their storms, folks in Cedar and northern Dixon counties got their own taste of Mother Nature's fury the following night.

At least two slow-moving tornadoes hit near Coleridge and north of Laurel, with another tornado reported northwest of Dixon. The storms came from a slow-moving wall cloud that seemed to wreak havoc on the area for most of Tuesday night.

Cleanup efforts all around the area were in progress at press time, but residents were bracing themselves for the possibility of another night of severe weather. Forecasters were reporting a good chance of storms on Wednesday, with the possibility of more storms coming by week's end.



(Photo courtesy Barbara Junck)

This feedlot in Wayne County quickly found itself under water after heavy rains over the weekend.



(Photo by Michael Carnes)

The Mark Moser homestead south and east of Wakefield was destroyed by Monday's tornado. This shot was taken with aerial assistance by Dana Tompkins.

Assistance available to dispose of deceased livestock

Officials with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced assistance is available for producers who suffered livestock mortality losses from the tornadoes that struck northeast Nebraska earlier this week.

Craig Derickson, NRCS State Conservationist said that \$100,000 in assistance is now available to help producers properly dispose of animal carcasses. Impacted producers have until Friday, July 18 to apply.

This assistance is available through a special Livestock Mortality Initiative through NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This Initiative is currently available to producers in Stanton, Wayne, Dixon, Thurston, Cuming and Cedar counties in northeast Nebraska. If additional severe storm events occur prior to the July 18 application deadline, more

counties can be included in the sign up eligibility area.

According to Derickson, this initiative provides technical and financial assistance to help producers dispose of livestock carcasses on their farm in a safe manner.

"Livestock producers with animal mortalities need to come to the NRCS office and sign up for the special initiative in order to be eligible to participate in the program. It is important for producers to understand the technical requirements for the animal composting practice. We want to make sure that producers have the assistance and information needed to dispose of animal carcasses in a manner that doesn't cause health and environmental concerns," Derickson said.

He went on to explain, "Getting signed up for the program at NRCS allows the producer to proceed with properly disposing of livestock. Once

funds are available, a contract will be developed with the livestock owner and payment will be approved once the project has been completed according to NRCS specifications."

Impacted producers should visit their local NRCS office located in the USDA Service Center. There, NRCS will work one-on-one with producers to develop a recovery plan that best meets the needs of their operation.

NRCS can also provide assistance to producers impacted by other recent severe weather events. For example, NRCS can help with windbreak damage, replacing fences and repairing terraces and other conservation practices.

"The bottom line is that NRCS is here to help producers recover from these devastating storm events," Derickson said.

For more information visit your local NRCS field office or www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov.

Ordinances approved as City Council holds short meeting

By CLARA OSTEN
Of the Herald

Six ordinances received final approval, one received second reading approval and four resolutions were approved during Tuesday's meeting of the Wayne City Council.

In what was one of the shortest meetings in recent months, the council approved ordinances dealing with the definitions of a townhouse, the word "attached" and "breezeway" and approved ordinances dealing with parking regulations in the northwest and southeast quadrants of the city.

All of these ordinances had been previously discussed by the council

and changes approved.

Resolutions approved during the meeting include the directing of the city clerk to assess mowing costs to become a lien on property at 908 Circle Drive and approving the Nebraska Community Energy Alliance Interlocal Cooperation Agreement to form an Energy Grant Funding Group for housing and transportation. The agreement will allow the city to be part of an incentive program to obtain Department of Energy funds.

Council members also listened to information provided by Ken Kwapioski of Arnie's Ford Mercury for the city's purchase of a half-ton pickup which uses both compressed

natural gas (CNG) and regular fuel.

Kwapioski explained to the council the state bidding process for the purchase of vehicles and gave details regarding the vehicle.

Council members also approved a liquor license manager application for Go Mirage, LLC, doing business as G's Quick Stop for Toniessa Prochaska.

Mayor Ken Chamberlain appointed Chad Maas and Joe Baldwin to the Civil Service Commission and their appointments were approved by the council.

The council will next meet in regular session on Tuesday, July 1 at 5:30 p.m.



(Photo by Clara Osten)

Sand Creek cuts the ribbon

Jule Goeller and Len Dickinson (center) and members of the Wayne Ambassadors took part in a grand re-opening ceremony at Sand Creek Post & Beam on Friday.

Bridge delay request denied

By MICHAEL CARNES
Of The Herald

Before awarding a \$1.7 million bid to an Iowa company for construction of four bridges in northern Wayne County, a resident near three of the bridge projects asked the Wayne County Commissioners to save taxpayer money and delay work on his neighboring bridges.

The county board was set to approve a bid of \$1,702,628 to Dixon Construction of Correctionville, Iowa, but Joel Hansen – whose property is located near three of the four bridges that were part of the bid – asked the board to hold off on the awarding of those construction projects.

Hansen, who told the board he was speaking to them as a county taxpayer and not as an employee of the City of Wayne or a member of the Lower Elkhorn NRD board, said that a flood control recreation area similar to the Willow Creek Recreation Area near Pierce would provide more benefit to county taxpayers than the repair of three 80-year old bridges.

"If you closed all three of those bridges, I would be the only person who would have to drive out of his way to get to Wayne," he said. "There isn't a single person out there who would put extra mileage on their vehicle to take another road to Wayne, and the bridges are between 13 and 15 tons, so they'll withstand the traffic if you leave them like they are now."

"We have a limited population and a limited pool of funds, and you are talking a handful of residents out there (who would benefit)," he added. "Spending up to two million dollars for 12 individuals doesn't seem ef-

ficient to me."

Hansen said a feasibility study could be done by the LENRD in about a year's time, and depending on available funding, a flood control recreation area could be built in about a decade's time. Such an area could provide a tremendous amount of economic benefit to the county, he said.

"If you look at Willow Creek, it was built 30 years ago and since then, Pierce County has added 123 homes around that lake on its tax rolls," he said. "I see people who make their lives here in Wayne County and then go to Stanton or Pierce and build \$300,000-\$400,000 homes around those lakes. Why wouldn't we want those property tax bases in our county?"

Board chairman Dean Burbach told Hansen that the projects had been on the county's 1-6 year road plans for sometime, and the board felt it was of utmost importance to improve the county's rural road system.

"Other people do use that system of bridges, and some of the dirt miles and small bridges have been a nuisance for them," he said. "We feel it's the taxpayers' money and we need to have our rural road system improved, and this is one way to do that. We just think it's vital to our road system and to the taxpayers out there."

Hansen said that, if the county is interested in seeing the area grow in future years, there are better options available.

The county went ahead and awarded the combined four-bridge project, which includes a bridge near Carroll, to Dixon Construction on a 2-0 vote, with board member Randy Larson absent due to cleanup activities regarding Monday's tornadoes in his district.



(Photo by Clara Osten)

Eagles Club donates to library

Julie Addison (left) presents a check to Wayne Public Library Director Lauran Lofgren from the Wayne Eagles Club. The club annually makes a donation to the library for the purchase of large print reading materials.

Public invited Habitat for Humanity dedication

A dedication ceremony will be held Sunday, June 29 for the fourth Habitat for Humanity home that has been completed in Wayne.

The home of Juan Vargas and family, located at 114 South Lincoln Street will be dedicated at 2 p.m.

A brief program will be held with a blessing and comments by members of the Habitat for Humanity

organization, city officials and clergy.

Entertainment will be provided and following the ceremony, refreshments will be served.

Those attending are encouraged to bring lawn chairs if they desire, as the ceremony will be held outside the home, weather permitting.

All those who have been involved

in the building of the home, whether they volunteered time, resources or made financial contributions, will be recognized.

Organizers stress the event is open to the public and urge everyone in the community to attend the celebration and welcome the family to the community.

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BRAN stop in Laurel a blast for bicyclists

A panoramic view of what looks like a small village on the football practice field at Laurel-Concord/Coleridge High School where the BRAN participants camped out for the night.



By MICHAEL CARNES
Of The Herald

They started trickling in a little before 10 a.m. Thursday. They came alone, in groups and even in tandem.

More than 600 bikers and their respective entourages rolled into Laurel on Thursday as the 34th Bicycle Ride Across Nebraska (BRAN) made its annual trek across the state, with Laurel serving as the fifth of seven stops on this year's week-long, 476-mile route.

As they rolled into town from the north on Highway 20, they received plenty of welcomes from local residents who cheered them into town, provided snacks and water and helped them get situated at the football practice field next to Laurel-Concord/Coleridge High School. The football field looked like a mini-village with hundreds of tents randomly pitched around the field.

For one rider, the BRAN trip has become an annual pilgrimage of sorts.

Al Roeder of Omaha is one of a handful of bikers who has been part of each of the 34 BRAN rides. The 68-year-old retired high school science teacher said the trip has been a lot of fun to be a part of over the years.

"It's some sort of mental imbalance, I guess," he said with a laugh when asked why he takes part in the yearly excursion. "Really, it's the people, the beautiful scenery, the blue skies – it's just a lot of fun."

The BRAN bikers have traveled from east to west for the last 33 years after the first year's journey – which was a real learning experience for all involved.

"We went from Fremont to Scottsbluff that first year, and that was a mistake," Roeder said. "Once we got to Scottsbluff, we were on our own to get home, so that was a real adventure."

Now, bikers park their vehicles at the final destination – Waterloo for this year's journey – and take a nine-hour chartered bus ride to the starting point, which was Rushville.

Semis carried their bikes, luggage and tents to the starting destination. Once the bikers put their bikes together and hit the road, the semis carried the rest of their equipment to Cody, Springview, Atkinson, Verdigre, Laurel and Lyons before making the final stop in Waterloo on Saturday.

Thursday's ride from Verdigre to Laurel turned out to be a perfect day for a bike ride, Roeder said, noting that weather is always a challenge when you're riding that many miles.

"Today it was fantastic. It was cool, dry and a good wind from the back," he said. "It was nothing like when we left Rushville on Sunday. We had rain, hail, lightning and the wind in our face. That was a lot less fun. You don't get days like this very often."

The people of Laurel treated their guests quite well on Thursday. Plenty of porta-potties were seen at the practice field, and the high school was open to allow riders to do everything from take a shower to charge their portable electronic devices. A pie and ice cream social was held in the old gymnasium, and there was plenty of food, drink and entertainment that was a short shuttle ride away.

All of that is important in making for a positive experience for bike riders when they come into town after a long bike ride.

"It's not glamorous, but one of the first things some communities fall down on is bathrooms," Roeder said. "Every morning around 5 a.m., about 800 people are hitting the toilets, and if you don't have enough available, it's a problem."

"You also want food that is relatively close by, because people like to kick back after all those miles and not do a lot of walking," he added. "Access to facilities and a nice, quiet place to fall asleep at the end of the day are really appreciated."

Roeder has ridden the last 26 BRAN rides with his daughter, Shannon, who started riding on the back of the blue-and-pink tandem bike when she was nine years old. Roeder said he enjoys the friends he has made along the bike route the last 34 years, and hasn't decided how many more times he'll make the statewide trek.

"Sometimes I think I'll quit at the age of 70 or 40 rides, but it's a lot of fun and I still enjoy it," he said. "We've made a lot of good friends over the years, and these are just the best people in the world."



Jack Anderson of Omaha talks with a member of Laurel's welcoming party, Stephanie Urwiler.

Wilton Roberts, Izac Reifenrath and Sutton Ehlers cheer one of the BRAN bikers as they ride into town Thursday.

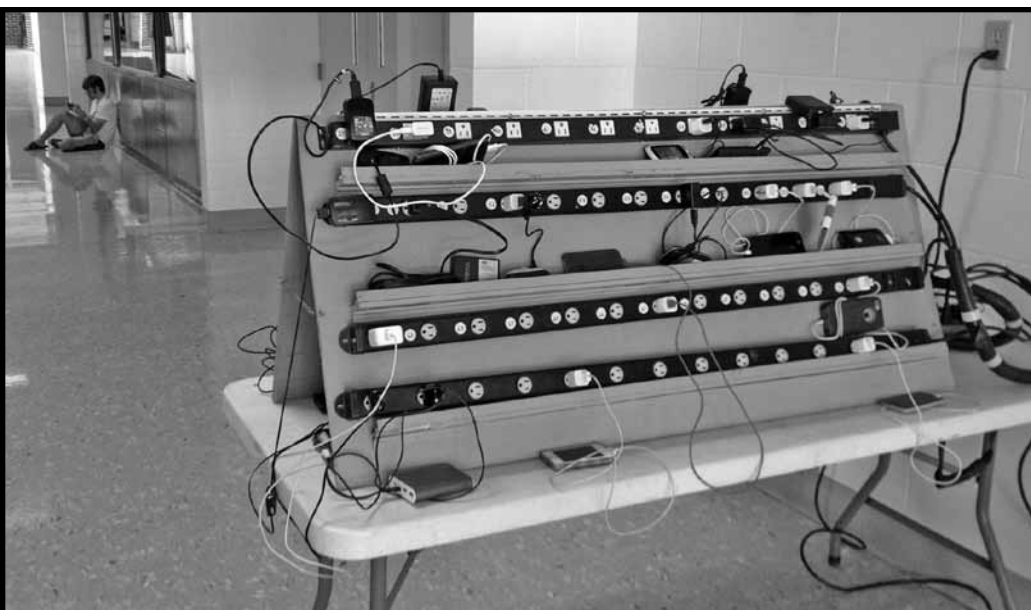


Matt Parsley of Scottsbluff presses the excess water out of a shirt he rinsed out after a long day's bike ride into Laurel.

Photos by
Michael Carnes



There were a lot of smiles on the faces of riders who rolled into Laurel on the BRAN route as they completed their journey from Verdigre late Thursday morning.



Having a charging station for electronic devices is a welcome site for those who participated in the 34th annual Bike Ride Across Nebraska. This one was located near the new gym at the high school.



Al Roeder of Omaha has been on all 34 BRAN rides, including the last 26 with his daughter, Shannon.



After a long bike ride, there's nothing like a cool patch of grass and a soft hay bundle to catch an early-afternoon nap.



Tom Granger of Topeka, Kan., pitches his tent while talking with Bob Frank of Richardson, Texas.



Brock Koranda, Carter Kvols and Gibson Roberts pull a wagon full of cold bottled water to offer to thirsty BRAN bikers after they stopped in Laurel on Thursday.



2014 Great Nebraska Tractor Ride



The Chicken poses beside one of the tractors at the Wayne County Fairgrounds while attempting to decide which was her (his?) favorite.



On Friday morning a long line of tractors could be seen making their way out of Wayne toward the Haskell Ag Lab at Concord. Here the convey crosses Highway 15 two miles north of Wayne.



Tractors from Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota were part of the 84-mile route for this year's Tractor Ride.



All makes and models of tractors, many more than 50 years old, and most equipped with umbrellas, were part of this year's ride.



Tractor owners and their families enjoyed a meal at the Commercial Building on the Wayne County Fairgrounds.

Photos by Clara Osten



Members of the Wayne community, including Ken Kwapnioski and Brian Kemp (left) served a chicken sandwich meal to those involved with the ride.



The tractors made their way back to Wayne on Friday afternoon before having a meal at Heritage Homes.



A great deal of reminiscing and discussion took place among tractor owners and members of the community as part of this year's event.



Tractor enthusiasts of all ages were able to view all the tractors at the Wayne County Fairgrounds on Thursday evening.

Red, green, orange, blue, yellow — all colors of tractors were on display and part of the ninth annual Great Nebraska Tractor Ride. This year's event began and ended in Wayne. Many of the tractors were equipped with a "seat" on the back so family members could travel with the tractor driver on the trip.



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Wayne Community Schools seeks an individual for the position of Elementary Bi-Lingual Secretary.

This is a full time position 40 hours a week, Full Health Insurance and Competitive Healthcare package. Qualified candidate must have a High School Degree and Courses or Training in Secretarial Skills, Word Processing, Office Software. The ability to speak, read and write fluent English and Spanish is required.

Applications will be accepted on the school website www.wayneschools.org. "District" tab, "Employment" tab, "Apply for a job with WCS". Applications will be accepted until position is filled.

For questions, please contact:
Mrs. Jill Pickinpaugh, Elementary Principal
Wayne Community Schools
611 W 7th Street, Wayne, NE 68787
402-375-3854 or jpicki1@wayneblu Devils.org

Wayne Community Schools is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Cook/Dietary Aide/CNA/ CMA/Restorative Aide

Full-Time or Part-Time

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EOE

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State Nebraska Bank & Trust is looking for a Chief Financial Officer/ Controller to join our team.

We are seeking an energetic, financial professional that is eager to make the next step in his or her career. You will have a great opportunity to tailor this position to fulfill the Bank's goals.

As a key member of the Executive Management team, the Chief Financial Officer will report to the CEO and assume a strategic role in the overall management of the Bank. The CFO will have primary day-to-day responsibility for planning, implementing, managing and controlling all financial-related activities of the company. This will include direct responsibility for accounting, finance, forecasting, strategic planning, job costing, deal analysis and negotiations, compliance, and facility management. Other objectives include reducing error rates in transaction processing and improving customer service. The successful candidate must be an outgoing, people-oriented person with a strong attention to detail and ability to multi-task.

A Bachelor's Degree in banking, finance, business administration or accounting is required. Banking or finance experience is highly preferred. Qualified applicants must be proactive and work well in a team environment; community involvement is highly encouraged. Credit history screened for this position.

This position will give you an opportunity to join a community-focused bank that offers a competitive salary and benefits package, including paid bank holidays, PTO, medical/dental/eye/disability insurance and 401(K) with an annual percentage employer match.

Submit a cover letter and resume to State Nebraska Bank & Trust, Attn: HR Dept., 122 Main Street, Wayne, NE 68787 or via email to info@statenebank.com.

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