



Around the Area

Seward

» Beef Quality Assurance Training will be held from 7 – 9 p.m. at the Seward Civic Center on Tuesday, Dec. 12. Please RSVP to 402.624.8030 or to Kristen.ulmer@unl.edu.

» The Sterling Connection Holiday Celebration will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 13 at 3 p.m. at the Seward High School Auditorium. This is a free event with refreshments and door prizes. RSVP by calling 402.646.4707 or email shana.glover@mhcs.us.

» "A Christmas Spectacular", a program featuring music, comedy and radio drama will be presented at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 14 at the Seward Civic Center. A free-will donation will be accepted to fund more productions in the Seward area.

» The Seward Senior Center will host

a Medicare update and fraud bingo, presented by the Nebraska Senior Health Insurance information program on Friday, Dec. 15 at 12:30 p.m.

» The annual Seward Rotary Club Breakfast with Santa is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 16 at 9 a.m. at the Seward Civic Center in the lower level. The event is open to all and includes doughnuts, candy, juice, milk and more candy. The event will have entertainment and lots of door prizes, along with music and of course a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. The entire event should last less than one hour. The event is co-sponsored by the Seward Rotary Club and members of the SHS FCCLA.

» Sally Jost will perform a Christmas show at the Olde Glory Theater on Saturday, Dec. 16. Friends joining her to perform this year will include Jonathan Jank, Stan Mitchell, Ken Kloke, Xander Foulk and the ladies' quartet, Cab-

rioleet. Doors will open at 6 p.m. for a social hour, and there will also be appetizers and desserts.

» The Seward High School Choir will present a concert at 9 a.m. on Monday, Dec. 18 at the Seward Senior Center.

» Seward County Public Transit will offer tours of the area's holiday lights Tuesday through Thursday, Dec. 19-21, from 5:30-6:30 p.m., each night. Cookies will be served as well. Call 402-643-4067 to reserve a seat.

» The St. John Lutheran PTL is accepting teams for its 2017 trivia night, scheduled for Friday, Jan. 19, at Harvest Hall. Questions will start at 7 p.m. Teams of eight will answer questions in 10 themed rounds. A silent auction, bar and others games will also be offered. Register at www.tinyurl.com/sjohntrivia.

» The Malcolm High Show Choir will present a concert at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 20 at the Seward Senior

Center.

» The Kramer Sisters will entertain at the Seward Senior Center on Wednesday, Dec. 20 at 1 p.m. Games will follow the concert.

» The community is invited to take an afternoon break and relax in front of the big screen in the lower level conference room at Seward Memorial Library. Bring your favorite snack and enjoy a new release feature film on Wednesday, Dec. 20 at 1:30 p.m.

» Seward County Public Transit will tour the area's holiday lights Tuesday through Thursday Dec. 19-21 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. each night. Cookies will be served as well. Call 402.643.4067 to reserve a seat.

» A UBBNRD Nitrogen Management Training session will be held at the Seward County Fairgrounds at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 24.



Tecumseh warden gives talk at NC Rotary meeting

Clifford Davis

cdavis@ncnewspress.com

Brad Hansen, warden at the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution (TSCI), was the featured speaker at the Nov. 29 Nebraska City Rotary Club meeting. Hansen has worked in corrections for 40-years. He focused his remarks on his tenure as TSCI's warden since 2016, describing changes he's implemented after two major riots at the prison in recent years, in May 2015 and March 2017.

Two inmates were killed in each of the two disturbances.

Hansen was put in charge of the Emergency Preparedness Program in 1996, responsible for making sure prisons are ready for any kind of emergencies. He then worked with a large intelligence group that monitors criminal and gang activity in the prisons, and taught leadership programs in his role as director of staff training.

When Hansen started his present job as warden at TSCI in 2016, "My main purpose was to go down

there and try to create a better, more positive culture for the staff," he said. In the May 2015 riot, two inmates were killed and several prison staffers were isolated for a time and "scared for their lives."

An institution tends to become known for such disturbances for years to come, said Hansen, and the prison lost quite a few staff afterward. Hansen's job was to provide a positive influence on staff and inmates alike. Things seemed to be going well, he said, but then another riot erupted on March 2 this year.

"There were gang members who didn't like the conditions and wanted to get even with inmates who they thought were telling on them," said Hansen. This was yet another setback, and the prison lost more staff.

The prison, which is classified as a "maximum/medium" facility for inmates with long sentences, should employ over 400 staff to handle its 1,026 inmates. But staffing is down at present with

110 positions vacant.

Prison staffers are paid a starting salary of \$18.16 an hour, with a \$2,500 signing bonus offered through January 2018 and longevity pay increases the longer a staffer stays in the job.

Hours are long—12-hour shifts, four days a week—and overtime up to a 16-hour shift is mandatory if staffing becomes critical. Furthermore, some staffers commute over an hour each way from Lincoln and other places.

Hansen addressed several myths about working in a prison like Tecumseh. "One of my jobs as the warden is to change how people perceive Tecumseh," he said. "The two disturbances don't help. But staff don't get assaulted every day."

Nevertheless, inmates have changed over the years as society has changed and staff assaults are more frequent now, whereas when Hansen began his career years ago, they were rare.

"About ten to 12 per-

cent of the population causes a lot of problems," Hansen said. The other 88 to 90 percent of inmates "are doing extremely well." Programs geared toward helping the men prepare themselves for release have increased by 50 or 60 percent in the last two years.

"It's a safety issue. Inmates are busy. They have hope. They believe that staff are treating them fair and respectfully, and that's the kind of institution we're trying to run right now," Hansen said. If you visited the prison, you would see a very clean operation, staff smiling, inmates talking to Hansen and others who come through—nothing like you've read in the news. "But the news tends to be dominated by the bad things," he said.

Hansen described a typical day in an inmate's life. Breakfast is at 6:30, then time spent in the day room or at classes, or working at a job, for instance in the laundry, which does the wash for other state facilities, or in the woodshop,

where desks are made for state offices. There is a count at 10:30, followed by lunch, and another at 4:30, followed by dinner. At 8:30 everybody is locked in their cell.

The inmates can see have visits a week, from Wednesday through Sunday.

Asked about how he is initiating change compared to before, Hansen described a simple tactic he used in his leadership training: "Manage by walking around; develop trust by letting people know you care about them...take an interest in them and ask questions."

Hansen stands in the chow line and chats with inmates during meals, and talks with his staff during the evening count when possible.

"It used to be that we would manage people as things...that doesn't fly with the young kids coming in today. We work real hard to make sure we are responsive to their needs and that we listen to everybody," he said.



Brad Hansen, warden of the Tecumseh State Correction Institution, addressed the Rotary Club about the current climate and recent problems at the prison.

PHOTO BY CLIFFORD DAVIS



EVENTS

Seward County Independent

DECEMBER 7-10 Share stories at gallery

Music, play staged at theatre

"A Visit from St. Nicholas or the Night Before Christmas," by Lowell Swortzel will be staged at The Olde Glory Theatre Dec. 7-10. Students of Marble Music Studio will provide seasonal music. Performances will be at 7 p.m. on Dec. 7 and 8 and 2 p.m. on Dec. 9 and 10. Tickets are available at www.oldeglorysewardne.com or by calling (402) 304-5392. Reserved seating is available for advanced tickets. Advanced tickets are \$10. Admission is \$12 at the door. Children 5 and under get in free. Special advance ticket price for Dec. 7 show is \$8.

Red Path Gallery and Tasting Room will be the site of "Sharing of Stories," a project by Concordia University students. The program will be from 3 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 9. The students interviewed a variety of people and will share their stories. Snacks and sodas will be available. The event is open to everyone.

THROUGH DECEMBER 9

Stuff the Cruiser begins collections

Seward Rotary's annual Stuff the Cruiser program has begun collecting toys and clothes for families with children age 0 to 14. The cruiser will be at Dollar General Friday, Dec. 8, and at the Seward Walmart Friday and Saturday, Dec. 8 and 9. Families wishing to sign up or anyone wishing to donate who will not be in town Dec. 8 and 9 or who wishes to donate money should call (402) 646-5755 between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m., any Seward Rotary member or the Seward Police Department. Distribution will be Saturday, Dec. 16.

DECEMBER 7

CSFP to distribute food

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program distribution clinic will be at 416 E Street, David City, Thursday, Dec. 7. To schedule an appointment or for more information, contact Blue Valley Community Action at (402) 729-2278 or (402) 643-6425.

Sale features Plum Creek authors

A children's book sale at Concordia University is scheduled from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 7, in the Thom Leadership Education Center on campus. The featured books will be from the authors and illustrators of the Plum Creek Children's Literacy Festival that took place Sept. 28-30. The books include those by Melissa Sweet, Tad Hills, Kadir Nelson, Patricia MacLauchlan and many more.

Give blood at high school

The Nebraska Community Blood Bank will host a blood drive Thursday, Dec. 7, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Seward High. All presenting donors in December are automatically entered to win men's college basketball tickets.

Mid-week movie planned at library

The community is invited to take an afternoon break and relax in front of the big screen in the lower level conference room at Seward Memorial Library. Bring your favorite snack and enjoy a new release feature film on Thursday, Dec. 7, at 1:30 p.m. Contact the library at (402) 643-3318 for specific movie titles.

DECEMBER 10

Legion schedules breakfast

The Pleasant Dale American Legion will host breakfast Sunday, Dec. 10, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. The menu includes pancakes, sausage, scrambled eggs, French toast, biscuits and gravy, coffee and juice. A fee will be charged.

DECEMBER 11

Male chorus to sing at senior center

The Concordia University Male Chorus will sing at the Seward Senior Center Monday, Dec. 11, at 11:40 a.m.

DECEMBER 12

Alzheimer's Caregiver Group to meet

The Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group will meet the second Tuesday of each month. The group is open to anyone who has a family member dealing with dementia. The meeting will be Tuesday, Dec. 12, at 7 p.m. at Brookdale Heartland Park.

DECEMBER 8-9

Concerts set on campus

Concordia University's Winter Jazzfest will take place at 7 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 8, in the Weller chapel auditorium.

The Concordia Handbell Choir and Handbell Choir II will perform at 3 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 9 in the Music Center's Recital Hall.

DECEMBER 13

Celebrate special days at senior center

The Seward Senior Center will celebrate birthdays and anniversaries Wednesday, Dec. 13, at 11:30 a.m. The Seward Kiwanis KiTones will sing at 1 p.m.

DECEMBER 9

Church hosts Breakfast in Bethlehem

Come celebrate the joy of the Christ-Child this Christmas with your family and friends at Breakfast in Bethlehem on Saturday, Dec. 9, at St. John Lutheran Church in Seward. A breakfast will be served from 8:30 to 11 a.m. and a variety of activities will begin at 9 a.m. and go until 11:30 a.m. Activities include take-home craft activities, complimentary family photo, story time, cookie shoppe and a children's gift shoppe and more. Everyone is welcome. Cost is \$1 per person for all ages. No pre-registration. For more information, call (402) 646-8749 or (402) 740-8448. St. John is located at the corner of North Columbia Avenue and Hillcrest Drive in Seward. Use the lower west entrance.

DECEMBER 14

CSFP planned in Milford

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) distribution clinic will be in Milford Thursday, Dec. 14. Appointments are required. To schedule an appointment or for more information, contact Blue Valley Community Action at (402) 729-2278 or (402)

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643-6425.

Grief support group to meet

Heartfelt Connections, a grief support group for parents who have lost children, will meet the second Thursday of each month. Contact Sharon Dickinson at (402) 643-8145 or Diane Krieser at (402) 588-2687 for more information or visit the website at seward-heartfeltconnections.org. The next meeting will be Thursday, Dec. 14, at 7 p.m. at the Seward Civic Center.

Christmas Spectacular comes to civic center

"A Christmas Spectacular," a program featuring music, comedy and radio drama, will be presented at 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 14, at the Seward Civic Center. A free-will donation will be accepted to fund more productions in the Seward area. For more information, contact (402) 937-9223.

DECEMBER 15

Medicare topic of update

The Seward Senior Center will host a Medicare update and fraud bingo, presented by the Nebraska Senior Health Insurance Information program, Friday, Dec. 15, at 12:30 p.m.

Singer to perform at winery

Andrea von Kampen will present a concert at Junto Winery Friday, Dec. 15, from 7-9 p.m. For more information, visit www.juntowine.com.

DECEMBER 16

Santa's coming for breakfast

The annual Seward Rotary Club Breakfast with Santa is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 16, at 9 a.m. at the Seward Civic Center in the lower level. The event is open to all and the cost is \$1 per person, which includes donuts, candy, juice, milk and more candy. The event will have entertainment and lots of door prizes, along with music and, of course, a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. The entire event should last less than one hour. The event is co-sponsored by members of the Seward High Family, Community and Career Leaders of America.

Pianist plans annual Christmas show

Sally Jost will perform a Christmas show at the Olde Glory Theatre on Saturday, Dec. 16. Friends joining her to perform this year include Jonathan Jank, Stan Mitchell, Ken Kloke, Xander Foulk and the ladies' quartet Cabriolet. Doors open at 6 p.m. for a social hour with a cash bar by Red Path Gallery and appetizers and desserts provided by Olde Glory. Tickets are available at www.oldeglorysewardne.com or by calling (402) 304-5392. Advanced tickets are \$10 with reserved seating. Tickets at the door are \$12.

643-6425.

DECEMBER 18

Seward choir to sing at senior center

The Seward High Show Choir will present a concert at 9 a.m. Monday, Dec. 18, at the Seward Senior Center.

DECEMBER 19

Genealogical Society will not meet

The Seward County Genealogical Society will not hold its monthly meeting in December. The society's library is still open Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. for those wishing to search its resources for genealogical and family history.

DECEMBER 20

Malcolm choir to sing at senior center

The Malcolm High Show Choir will present a concert at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 20, at the Seward Senior Center.

Christmas program planned

The Kramer Sisters will entertain at the Seward Senior Center Wednesday, Dec. 20, at 1 p.m. Games will follow the concert.

Take a break with a movie

The community is invited to take an afternoon break and relax in front of the big screen in the lower level conference room at Seward Memorial Library. Bring your favorite snack and enjoy a new release feature film on Wednesday, Dec. 20, at 1:30 p.m. Contact the library at (402) 643-3318 for specific movie titles.

DECEMBER 19-21

Public Transit offers light tours

Seward County Public Transit will tour the area's holiday lights Tuesday through Thursday, Dec. 19-21, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. each night. Cookies will be served, as well. Call (402) 643-4067 to reserve a seat. The cost is \$4.

DECEMBER 21

Chamber hosts movie night

The Milford Chamber will host movie night Thursday, Dec. 21, Concessions open at 5:30 p.m., with the movie starting at 6:30 p.m. at the Milford Senior Center.

THROUGH DECEMBER 21

Santa stops in Seward house

Santa Claus will be in his house on the north side of the courthouse on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays during December. Hours are Wednesdays through Dec. 20 from 6 to 8 p.m.; Thursdays through Dec. 21 from 6 to 8 p.m.; Saturdays through Dec. 16 from 3 to 5 p.m.; and Sundays through Dec. 17 from 1 to 3 p.m.

DECEMBER 23

Come see living nativity

Ebenezer United Methodist Church, rural Waco, will present a living nativity Saturday, Dec. 23, from 6 to 7 p.m. A candlelight service will go from 7:30 to 8 p.m., with sandwiches and goodies following. The church is located at 12th and Road U, Waco.

JANUARY 19

Get brain ready for trivia night

The St. John Lutheran PTL is accepting teams for its 2017 trivia night, scheduled for Friday, Jan. 19, at Harvest Hall. Questions start at 7 p.m. that night. Teams of eight answer questions in 10 themed rounds. A silent auction, bar and other games are also available. The cost is \$160 per table or \$150 if paid in advance. Register at www.tinyurl.com/stjohntrivia, email stjohntrivia@gmail.com or call Michelle Meyer at (402) 523-0068.

WEEKLY

Alcoholics Anonymous

Seward—Mondays, Civic Center, noon; Tuesdays, Faith Lutheran Church, 7:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, Civic Center, 7:30 p.m.; Fridays, Civic Center, 7:30 p.m.; Sundays, Civic Center, 9 a.m. and Faith Lutheran Church, 7 p.m.

Beaver Crossing—Saturdays, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 7 p.m.
Milford—Thursdays, Bellwood Mennonite Church, 7:30 p.m.



Five facts for your week

- Bold Nebraska is hosting informational meetings for landowners and community members in the counties now on the proposed Keystone XL pipeline Mainline Alternative Route. Bold's Jane Kleeb will give an overview about landowner rights, eminent domain and easement terms and provide contacts for attorneys who are representing landowners who have refused to sign easements with TransCanada. The meeting will be from 6 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec.

13, at Olde Glory Theatre in Seward.

- Landowners who have questions about the proposed pipeline can reach TransCanada either by telephone or by email at 1 (866) 585-7063 or kxlland@transcanada.com.

- Breakfast in Bethlehem will take place Dec. 9 at St. John Lutheran Church in Seward. A breakfast will be served from 8:30 to 11 a.m. and a variety of activities will begin at 9 a.m. and go until 11:30 a.m. Everyone

is welcome. Cost is \$1 per person for all ages. No pre-registration. For more information, call (402) 646-8749 or (402) 740-8448. St. John is located at the corner of North Columbia Avenue and Hillcrest Drive in Seward. Use the lower west entrance.

- Seward Rotary's annual Stuff the Cruiser program has begun collecting toys and clothes for families with children age 0 to 14. The cruiser will be at Dollar General Friday, Dec. 8, and at the

Seward Walmart Friday and Saturday, Dec. 8 and 9. Families wishing to sign up, or anyone wishing to donate who will not be in town Dec. 8 and 9 or who wishes to donate money, should call (402) 646-5755 between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Distribution will be Saturday, Dec. 16.

- Want to know what's going on in and around Seward County? Sign up for SCI News Now, a daily update from the Seward County Independent. Sign up at sewardindependent.com/emailalerts.



the Sentinel

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Friend Chamber of Commerce to host Christmas Festival

by David Brinkmeyer

Friend Sentinel

The 11th annual Chamber of Commerce Christmas Festival will be celebrated Wednesday, Dec. 13, at the community building and San Carlo Room in Friend. The Chamber of Commerce will serve a soup supper in the community building from 5-7 p.m with a variety of soups and sides.

The San Carlo Room will host many activities for both children and adults highlighted by a raffle. Tickets are \$5 and can be purchased at chamber member local businesses. The raffle will happen at 7 p.m., and ticket holders need not be present

to win. First prize is a \$200 beef bundle, with second, third and fourth prizes being pork bundles. The raffle will include over 50 baskets presented by local business, area clubs and individuals. Proceeds from the raffle will go to the Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Fund.

Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus and Santa's elves will make an appearance and give out treat bags sponsored by the Friend Masonic Lodge. There will be hot chocolate and apple cider to enjoy sponsored by the Friend Rotary Club, and the Friend Area Fund is hosting gingerbread cookie decorating. Local choirs will be sharing music, and there will be hayrack rides.



around town
Campaign Kickoff

The Gathering Place
kicks off campaign
at 35th anniversary
celebration

BY SARA BISHOP

The Gathering Place celebrated its 35th anniversary in Lincoln Oct. 25. This soup kitchen and program of Community Action serves over 25,000 hot meals to those who are hungry each year.

Guests, volunteers, donors, staff and founders celebrated the milestone event at The Gathering Place, 1448 E St. Valentino's, the event sponsor, generously provided the dinner, and volunteers from Lincoln Rotary Club 14 helped with serving.

Vi See, Community Action executive director, kicked off the program portion of the event, followed by congratulatory words from Lancaster County Commissioner Jennifer Brinkman. Concluding the program was Joyce Sturdy, one of six founders, who shared memories of The Gathering Place's first days of operation.

The event provided an opportune time to kick off The Gathering Place's 35th anniversary fundraising campaign. Thanks to generous contributions from the Rogers Foundation, Union Bank & Trust, Greenwald Family Charitable Trust, Inspro Insurance, Unico Group Inc., Sue Quambusch and Len Sloup, all donations received for The Gathering Place through Dec. 31 will be matched

87 cents on the dollar. Community Action's board of directors gave the first donation at the event to honor the founders, whose collective vision has improved countless lives in the city.

Over 41,000 people in Lancaster County

don't know where their next meal is coming from. The need for meals at The Gathering Place will be especially great as the holidays approach. To support its work to fight hunger in Lincoln today, go to communityactionat-work.org.



Joyce Sturdy, one of six founders, shares memories of The Gathering Place's first days of operation Oct. 25 at the nonprofit soup kitchen's 35th anniversary celebration.

COURTESY PHOTO