



## ROCK COUNTY GOES LIVE

WITHIN THESE  
PAGES:

BY SUPERINTENDENT MARK OTTEN

Live performances are here! Thanks to the Rock County Community Fund and North Central Youth Athletic Club for generous donations which will cover all of our up-front costs involved with livestreaming for Rock County Public Schools. The costs involved were a major roadblock for the district in getting this done and these two organizations stepped up and allowed us to get all of the equipment we will need in order to put together a quality livestream for our patrons to enjoy athletic, fine arts, and other events which occur at the school. We were able to purchase two cameras and all of the necessary accessories to have a good quality production for our events. You will be able to find links to the events on our website and app.

As you all know, COVID has forced us to do things a little different at Rock County Public Schools this year. Right now, we are asking students and staff to pitch in and wipe down desks, chairs, and other hard surfaces multiple times throughout the day. We are also all getting our temperatures taken at a minimum of twice per day in order to help monitor for symptoms and keep sick people out of the buildings to cut down on the spread. Lunch times are looking different as we have split our grade school lunch into two sessions in order to distance our kids at the tables. All personnel in the buildings are expected to wear a mask and wear it appropriately, which can be a battle some days. We are asking our teachers to teach students in their classrooms as well as students who are at home due to isolation or quarantining due to COVID. Rock County Public School teachers have also taught from home at times due to isolation or quarantine orders from the health department this year.

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## *ROCK COUNTY GOES LIVE...CONTINUED*

Not to mention, we are only allowed 25% capacity and household members only in our buildings for events which is the driving force behind the need for the livestreaming equipment made available by Rock County Community Fund and NCYAC.

Information and guidance have been changing fairly rapidly this fall and we are doing our best to keep up with everything while making decisions based on what we feel is best for our students and staff. Unfortunately, COVID doesn't just hit you physically, it has hit us all mentally. We are trying to maintain balance between what is best for our staff and students physically to keep them safe and healthy while also keeping in mind what is best for them mentally as well as educationally. We feel it is best to keep kids and staff in the buildings as much as possible as it is best for both groups mentally and it is best for the students academically. We cannot thank the students, parents, staff, and community enough for all of the support that has been shown and given during these times.

### *REAL WORLD LESSONS LEARNED*



**JILIAN BUELL**

I am Jillian Buell, and I have been on the Rock County Granting Committee for three years. Being a member of this committee has taught me various lessons and skills I have been able to use throughout my high school career. I have learned how to work well with others to make important decisions. The committee has allowed me to gain experience in dealing with finances and local businesses. I have been given the opportunity to work with community leaders that have given me significant insight into how our community functions, as well as how to give back. Being a member of this committee has given me so many valuable experiences that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. I will be graduating from Rock County High School in May. Following graduation, I plan to attend UNL majoring in Business Marketing. As I leave my hometown, I reflect on how our community stays viable through financial support from the Rock County Community Fund. I am thankful for the opportunity I have been given and hope the future youth members of the Rock County Granting Committee can have the same impactful experience.

I am Paxton Smith, and I have been on the Rock County Granting Committee for three years. Having the opportunity to be on this committee has taught me numerous lessons and life skills that I use now, and will use in the future. The other members of this committee have taught me how to work better with a team and how to become comfortable in a room with people that you might not regularly see or talk to. The committee has also allowed me to gain experience in dealing with finances and local businesses. I have been given the chance to work on the same team as numerous community leaders, who haven't hesitated to give me all sorts of advice that will benefit me for the rest of my life. I will be graduating from Rock County High School in May. Following graduation, I plan to attend Mount Marty University on a football scholarship, with a major in Business Administration. When I leave Bassett and begin this new journey of adulthood, I will look back on my involvement with the community as well as my presence on the Rock County Granting Committee, and I will take pride in the people I worked with and the lessons they taught me.



**PAXTON SMITH**

# *ROCK COUNTY COMMUNITY FUND GRANTS \$20,000 FOR COMMUNITY-BETTERMENT*

Rock County Community Fund (RCCF) rolled out over \$20,000 in quality-of-life grants during the month of June. All grants were made from RCCF's unrestricted endowment account, which members of a volunteer fund advisory committee have long been focused on building to address community needs and create opportunities for prosperity in Rock County. Grants went to the Rock County Hospital, the Rock County Hospital Auxiliary Thrift Store and provided matching funds for a Bassett Pool and Rock County Library fundraiser.

Rock County has been in critical need of a ventilator for many years and with the help of the grant, the hospital and Emergency Medical Service of Rock County were able to purchase a one. Katie Ogier, Rock County Hospital's Acute Care Director of Nursing, said "The ability to utilize this piece of equipment will ensure a higher level of care and a safer and more affordable option for our patients at Rock County Hospital."

The second grant to the Rock County Hospital was used to update the door security system. Stacey Knox, Rock County Hospital Administrator, explained that the purchased hardware will tie into the current system and allow employee badge access to two designated doors.

Money granted to the Rock County Hospital Auxiliary is being used to help with remodeling costs at the thrift store. The auxiliary has used the closure of the thrift store due to the Covid-19 pandemic as a way to complete some long overdue infrastructure work in the store.

The Bassett Pool and Rock County Library also made the best of Covid-19 with Porch Portraits. Local photographers captured family portraits on community member's porches and were able to raise \$1,500 to be used for their projects. The granting committee chose to match the aforementioned funds to help with the cause. Contributing to RCCF's unrestricted endowment account is one of the easiest ways individuals, families and businesses can invest in the future of Rock County. An unrestricted endowment acts like a savings account for the future. All contributions placed in the account are invested and only a portion of the investment earnings are granted every year, providing a steady stream of revenue to fund projects and programs today, 50 years from now and forever. Contributions may be made with checks payable to Nebraska Community Foundation with "Rock County Community Fund" in the memo line and mailed to: Rock County Community Fund, PO Box 506, Bassett, NE 68714. Donations may also be made online at <https://www.nebcommfound.org/give/rock-county-community-fund>. Members of the Rock County Community Fund Advisory Committee said they are excited to see the community benefiting from the funds that the granting committee distributes each cycle. The next granting cycle is in November and applications are available at [www.rockcountycommunityfund.com](http://www.rockcountycommunityfund.com).

*COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT- JENESSA SAWYER*



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***Creating a place  
that young  
families can make  
a life is something  
I hold dear!***

***-Jenessa***

Our 2020 Committee spotlight is Jenessa Sawyer. Jenessa was raised in the foothills of the Beartooth Mountains where her love of rural communities, small business and agriculture took form. Jenessa and her husband Adam moved to Bassett in the Fall of 2017 where they joined the family ranching operation. In 2018 they welcomed their son Augustus. When not ranching, volunteering or chasing a busy toddler Jenessa enjoys reading, scrapbooking and getting to the mountains to hike. Jenessa joined the Rock County Community Fund in 2019!

**Why did you join RCCF:** Rural America is the heart of this county. Creating a place that young families can make a life is something I hold dear, being on RCCF lets me do just that. RCCF also gives me the opportunity to give my time to the small business owners, health care works and the other people that make this community home for me.

**What do you enjoy most about being on RCCF:** I work with an awesome team that at their core wants to leave Rock County better than they found it.

**How has volunteering for RCCF changed you:** Volunteering for RCCF has given me the opportunity to see all the amazing things that are happening and the things that are to come to Rock County. On a personal front it has taught me the importances of contributing to things that matter to you.

# *ROCK COUNTY GROWTH AND ROCK COUNTY COMMUNITY FUND DIVIDE*

BY ANN DVORAK



## *Vision*

In 2013, twelve Rock County community members came together and reorganized the group that was once known as the Bassett Development Corporation. A new name was created - Rock County Growth, Inc. and restructuring took place with a vision that Rock County would be a progressive, vibrant community, which would welcome and retain residents, visitors, and businesses.

One of the first goals of this group was to create financial stability so that our community could grow and prosper. From this goal came the formation of the Rock County Community Fund, an affiliate fund under the Nebraska Community Foundation. This Fund was established in 2014, and since that time, the Rock County Growth, Inc. board and the Rock County Community Fund board have been operated by the same 12 individuals.

With the growing responsibilities of both boards, a decision was made in 2020 that the two boards would divide. This division will allow each board to maintain better focus on their areas of expertise: Rock County Community Fund is the philanthropic organization and Rock County Growth, Inc. is the economic development organization. The two will work together to advance projects in Rock County. Currently, RCCF is working to grow the unrestricted endowment, which allows money each year to be granted to community projects. RCCF is also currently raising money to build a community center. Rock County Growth, Inc. is concentrating on economic development issues such as housing, daycare, building the community center, and operating the Old Feed Store Art Center.

According to Ann Dvorak, President of Rock County Growth, Inc., "The division of the Rock County Growth, Inc. and Rock County Community Fund boards, will assist both boards in better achieving their missions. It also allows us to bring in new leadership to serve on these boards. This new energy will help continue to make Rock County a progressive, vibrant community."

As we transition through this division, several past Rock County Growth board members will remain on the Growth board to help make this conversion smooth. If you are interested in serving on the Rock County Growth, Inc. board or as a member of a committee for economic development, please contact Ann Dvorak @ [advorak@rockcountyschools.org](mailto:advorak@rockcountyschools.org).

Current board members for Rock County Growth, Inc. are Ann Dvorak, President; Hannah Greenwell, Vice President; Teresa Wiest, Secretary; Homer Buell, Treasurer; Jack Olson; Britt Bolte; Saresse Clay; Leah Hagan; Emily Eberspacher; Dennis Swanson; Zoe Shankland; and Sonny Corkle.

Current board members for Rock County Community Fund are Dennis Swanson, Chair; Ann Dvorak, Vice Chair; Teresa Wiest, Secretary; Homer Buell, Treasurer; Gary Shankland; Jim Nelson; Larry Buell, Emily Eberspacher; Jenessa Sawyer, Tiffany Maurer; Tami Cosgrove; and Sonny Corkle.



# DREAMS WELCOME

BY HOMER BUELL

The Nebraska Community had its annual celebration virtually this year because of the pandemic. The theme was “Dreams Welcome” and from what I saw and heard from the sessions I was able to attend; it was a huge success! Here are a few of my takeaways.

**Be Welcoming**—whether it be our youth or new families moving into our community let them know they are welcome. We all need to understand the power of an invitation. Giving mailboxes, a subscription to the local newspaper, cups to graduates, phone charger packs, pen and a thumb drive highlighting the area, are just a few of the ways communities are showing that they care about newcomers to the community or having past graduates return home.

**Planned Giving**—most of us seem to just have the funds available to provide for ourself and our family needs and are hesitate to commit to charities. Planned giving through our wills is a good way to address the needs of our community and our families at the same time.

**Home Grown Challenge Grants**—The fund advisory committee in Keya Paha County did this a few years ago. If our FAC in Rock County pledged another \$50,000 for our endowment will our community step and double that amount? Another \$150,000 dollars will take the endowment to over one million! Think about what having \$45,000 to invest in the future of our community each year can mean.

I always come away from Nebraska Foundations annual meeting excited about what can be accomplished if people work together for shared goals. Seeing what your peers have done in other communities is truly uplifting. We all need to “Turn on our Dream Switch” and invest in our future by investing in our community!!!!

## PLEDGE CARD

If you would like to contribute to the Rock County Community Fund Endowment or if you would like more information on becoming a member of the 1888 legacy society, please fill out the form below and return it to PO Box 506, Bassett, NE 68714.

NAME (as you would like it to be listed): .....

ADDRESS: .....

EMAIL: .....

DONATION: ..... \$50 ..... \$100 ..... \$250 ..... \$500 ..... \$1,000 ..... Other

- ☐ YES! I want my donation to go towards the community center building project.
- ☐ YES! I want my donation to go towards the endowment fund.
- ☐ I am interested in automatic withdrawal on a monthly or quarterly basis.
- ☐ I want to be a member of the 1888 Legacy Society by including the RCCF in my estate plan.
- ☐ I am a member of the 1888 Legacy Society, having include the RCCF in my estate plan.
- ☐ I would like more information on the RCCF.

The Rock County Community Fund is an affiliated fund of the Nebraska Community Foundation ("NCF, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. All contributions to our Fund are tax-deductible.

Pease direct all inquires to Homer Buell, Charman of the Rock County Community Fund, at either (402) 760-0615, or via email to [homer@nntc.net](mailto:homer@nntc.net).

# ***GIVING BACK-ANNUAL GIVING TOTALS***

## **TO MOVE FORWARD YOU HAVE TO GIVE BACK"-OPRAH WINFREY**

### **Bronze**

**\$1.00-\$499.00**

Renee and Jim Atkisson  
William and Ofelia Ramirez Andersen  
Allen and Evelyn Armstrong  
Cheryl Arrowsmith  
Bruce and Roxann Boettcher  
Brain C. and Elaine Buescher  
Ernest and Connie Bussinger  
Billy and Sara Butler  
Jessica Clark  
Leanne Cook  
Richard Cosgrove  
Linda Coulter  
Flair Styling Salon  
Duane and Marcia Fritz  
Donald Fritz  
David and Becky Fritz  
Corey Frizzell  
Dean Gilg  
Joe and Cheryl Hazel  
William R. and Becki J. Herrington  
Debbie Hollenbeck  
Brandi Hollenbeck  
Scott and Dorrann Hultman  
Colleen Ittel  
Douglas and Carol Ann Jilg  
Mark and Mary Kay Keck  
David and Linda Knoetzel  
Paul and Kay Knox  
Krotter Home  
Joanne Laine  
Ashley Leonard  
Howard A.\* and Josephine K.\* Lamb  
Dennis and Cynthia Lane  
Joan Lewis  
Bryce and Elizabeth Lund  
Ross Morgan  
Curtis and Michele Nelson  
Philomenia Pape  
Dennis and Susan Parr  
Douglas H. and Rita Sue Parr  
C. Jane Rumbaugh  
Flair Styling Salon  
Charles E. and Ann Shaw  
Delmar Spoering  
Matthew Stoltenberg  
Susan Tracy  
Frances Walkes

### **Silver**

**\$500.00-\$2,499.00**

Jerry and Rhonda Ammon  
Joann Panzer-Anderson  
Joey and Tricia Anderson  
James Arnholt  
Bar 7 Inc.  
Vaughn and Teresa Beed  
Alvin and Shanda Benemerito  
Bullet, INC  
Steven A. and Kristie J. Camp  
Colby Coash  
Chad and Sonja Corkle

### **Silver Con't**

**\$500.00-\$2,499.00**

Keith and Tamara Cosgrove  
Raymond and Margaret Davis  
Steven L. and Margaret M Davis  
Matt and Ann E. Dvorak  
Allen and Deb Fischer  
Ben and Lisa J. Fischer  
Mike and Jan Foster  
Thomas and Debra  
Frank Kayti Gordon  
Dustin and Becca Gordon  
Joan Hall  
Phyllis Harlan  
Beau J. and Shelly R. Herrington  
Lynn and Shirley Hickman  
James J. and Ann M. Hoch  
Robert and Sue Huffman  
Nicholas J Desiderio and Michele R Johns Erin  
Johnson  
Jimm G. and Betty L. Johnson  
Kay Lynn Kalkowski  
Kalkowski Enterprises Inc  
Eric R. and Brittany A. Kauffman  
Richard and Margaret Kinney  
Richard and Genevieve Lackaff  
Bob R and Patsy P Lewis  
Loren and Marilyn Lund  
Sally Mauch  
Richard McCall  
James E. and Lori G. McClurg  
Stanley J and Barbara J McLaughlin Barbara  
Hughes McLaughlin  
Joyce Menzel  
Terri Moorman  
Daniel and Debbie Morrison  
Todd Mundhenke  
Northern Plains Supply Inc  
Mark and Stacy Otten  
James Panzer, M.D.  
Krynn Buckley-Pechous, MD  
Don W and Mary Roggasch  
Steven Rumbaugh  
William and Bonnie Sanger  
Sanger's Market  
Donald Schmaderer  
Jon D. and Jennifer L. Schmaderer  
Scott's Place  
Frank and Pamela Seberger  
Lee and Deborah Seberger  
Gary and Jeanie Shankland  
Tim and Penni Shaw  
Kent and Faye Smith  
Scott and Nancy Steinhauser Richard Steskal  
Brock and Karen Stoltenberg  
Rod and Lori Stolcpart  
Brock Stoltenberg  
Swanson Brothers  
William and Carolyn Sybrant  
Richard Terry  
Howard E and Patricia A Thompson  
Joan Thorne  
FHL Bank Topeka  
Robert Van Norman  
Marcia Weber  
Whistle Stop

### **Gold**

**\$2,500.00-\$4,999.00**

Thomas and Carol Becker  
Dale and Audrey G. Caskey  
Ernest A. and Betty J. Hasch  
Jake E. and Tiffani J. Maurer  
Daniel and Debbie Morrison  
James and Judy Nelson  
Shovel Dot Ranch  
Jay and Kay Stewart  
Donald D and Therese M Swanson

### **Diamond**

**\$5,000.00-\$9,999.00**

Anonymous Contribution  
William B and Alice M. Allen  
Paul Engler  
David and Kristine Gale  
Arlen and Jeri Nelson  
Lynn E. and Joy D. Zumbrunn

### **Platinum**

**\$10,000.00-\$25,000.00**

Lawrence and Nickie Buell  
Homer and Darla Buell  
Richard Mauch  
Dennis and Teri Swanson  
Tri County Bank  
West Central Initiative

### **Platinum Plus**

**\$25,000.00+**

Anonymous Contribution  
DBA First Bank or Colorado National  
Association  
Rock County Growth, INC  
Sandhill Equipment  
The Vetter Foundation



P0 Box 506  
Bassett, NE 68714

[www.rockcountycommunityfund.com](http://www.rockcountycommunityfund.com)



[www.facebook.com/rockcountycfund](https://www.facebook.com/rockcountycfund)

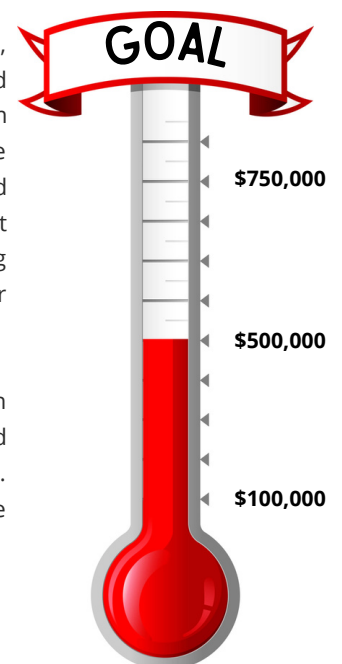
## *PROGRESS EVEN IN UNCERTAINTY*

BY DENNIS SWANSON

It's no questions that 2020 will be a year we NEVER forget. It was a year of change, challenge, adaptation and uncertainty. Something slowed down, while others stopped altogether. That is the category our Rock County Community Center fell into. Our team members have made a lot of progress since last years annual letter. We have some definite but still flexible blue print along with some quality numbers. All the building and materials will be local contractors. This makes it great to have our Community Center built by COMMUNITY people. We had first round approval from Peter Krewit and nicely moving toward the 2nd round when Covid hit. Krewit stopped all grants of all kinds for development in order to assist in the pandemic. Which is understandable and very noble.

We have had a fair amount of success considering the unknown year. At this time between CD money market accounts and pledges we have right at \$500,000. We are looking to add \$300,000-\$500,000 more before we break ground. Kiewirt grant will be a big part of that. Then we can look to the future and reach out to our community to help us across the finish line.

Thank you for you continued support and have a great Holiday Season.





## COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT- TERESA WIIEST



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*It's important that we take care of the people that are here now but we look to the future so that we can make this home for years to come.*

*-Teresa Wiest*

Teresa who was raised in Rock county returned 16 years ago with her husband Steve to make the Sybrant Community south of Bassett home. Their two children Kade a 6th grader and Addie a 4th grader attend Pony Lake rural school. They enjoy our local North Central Youth Athletic club and Boy and Girl Scouts. Steve is employed at Sandhill Equipment and Teresa has a small cattle herd with her family's. Steve and Teresa are very involved in our community. Teresa is currently secretary of the school board, on the Rocktoberfest committee, KBR Leadership advisory board, Rock County High School Foundation, a girl scout leader, Sunday school teacher, president of the Helping Hand Club, a Newport fireman and secretary of the community fund. Steve is involved with the Boy Scout troop, the Rocktoberfest committee, a Newport Fireman and board member, and Secretary of the Sybrant Community Church board. Teresa joined RCCF in 2018. To quote her from our video produced this summer, "It's important that we take care of the people that are here now but we look to the future so that we can make this home for years to come." Teresa and her family are proud to call Rock County home and are excited to see what is in store as the endowment through RCCF continues to grow and give back to this County.

# LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE

## BY NORFOLK DAILY NEWS

Meet Noah Seberger, age 10, who talks about his hometown of Bassett and the summer program he enjoyed at the Rock County Public Library, made possible in part by the Rock County Community Fund and an anonymous donor of Nebraska Community Foundation.



### **Tell us a little about yourself and your family.**

I am in the fourth grade at Bassett Grade School. We live on our family ranch. My mom, Debbie, teaches first grade, and my sister, Isabelle, is in the first grade. My dad, Lee, works at Sandhills State Bank and ranches with his parents. We also have a dog named Bowser.

### **What did you like most about the programs offered this summer at the library?**

I really liked the robotics program. There were different kinds of robots, but one of my favorites was the Dash and Dot robots that you control the movements with an iPad. We would build barriers made out of library books and when the robot came upon a barrier, it would turn and go in different directions.

Learning how to code was fun. The librarians helped us to code out our names and then you could do fun stuff with them like changing the backgrounds.

### **The theme for this year's summer program was "space." What were some of the activities that were related to this topic?**

In some of the activities, the older kids like me were paired with little kids. In one class we helped them walk through the library searching for a paper cut-out of a Star Wars character that had a letter printed on it. When we found all the characters, we would help them write out all the letters to spell out a sentence.

### **What do you like best in school?**

I like math and reading. I like reading big chapter books – stories about realistic fiction. I was excited to go back after summer.

### **Have you thought about what you might like to do when you grow up?**

Yes, I'd like to be a heart surgeon. I just like doctors. I did some medical research and being a heart surgeon is what I'd like to do.

### **If you had a pen pal and had to tell them what your hometown was like, what would you say?**

Bassett has lots of open space. There are lots of trees, grass, bodies of water, and nature. Everyone knows each other. They look out for each other. There are lots of community events like Roctoberfest, the Expo and the fair, where we can spend time together. I live outside of town now, but when we were in town, we would ride our bikes down to this cute farmers market. It's a nice, safe place to live.