

LONG PINE JOURNAL

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May 2007

City Council

It's been quite a ride.

During the winter, most of the action at the Long Pine City Council meetings surrounded feelings some Long Pine citizens had towards the conduct of the campaigning, and the results of the mayoral election.

After a couple of months of regular and special council meetings - where voices were sometimes raised to a level unheard of in recent years - the focus turned toward the mishandling of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) housing program.

During the most recent meeting of 3 May, the decibel level was actually quite low. Except for the disruption of the proceedings by the fire siren, the gathering of about thirty people was treated to what normally takes place at council meetings; the discussion of city business with just an occasional raised voice:

- Future water bills will contain additional information about city and community activities.
- 9 May is the day set for the Health Committee (Mayor Al Graves, Council President Jim Debolt, and the Sheriff) to look the town over for property that might need cleaning up.
- On 12 May, the city council will meet to review the "Code of Ordinances".
- A community cleanup event will take place on 19 May. More information will be forthcoming from the city.
- Repair of a drain pipe near 4th and Pine was approved. Money for the work is in the budget.
- The Planning Commission members (Dennis Gaskins, Mike Lehn, James Dillon, Dan Daily, and Dora Johnson) were announced, as was the Board of Adjustment members (Brad Witte, Jim Statler, Paula Welke, Mike Hempel, and Doc White).
- The go-ahead was given to replace two inoperative fire hydrants. One is at 3rd and Main. The other is at 7th and Cedar.
- Transferring operation control of the Bunkhouse

(See Council on page 2)

The Palace

The Palace Project is continuing to move forward. There hasn't been any construction yet, but in the past two months, the main architect for the project has been hired, soil core samples have been taken from around the building site, and a \$30,000 USDA grant has been approved.

In March, the two architectural firms (Gilmore & Associates of Columbus, and Master Builders Associates of Doniphan, Nebraska) competing for the Palace Project, made their presentations to the Long Pine Foundation. Although Gilmore & Associates had been contracted to do the feasibility study and had drawn up preliminary plans, choosing which architect was to carry the project to completion was a totally new step in the project. In the end, Master Builders was chosen.

While both architectural firms had sound projects, Master Builders was chosen in part because, a) their plan provided more square feet of floor space for less money, b) their plan showed the city hall and fire hall as separate standing - but interconnected - structures which would provide for minimal intrusion into the Palace walls, and c) the front of the stage would still be intact and functional. *(See the external views and the floor plan on pages 4 and 5)*

An additional plus for Master Builders was the President of Master Builders; Kenneth Frederick. Kenneth grew up in Bassett, and had actually played basketball on the Palace court as a youngster in the Pee Wee Basketball program. It was felt that his familiarity with the Palace and the city put Master Builders in a better position to achieve the goals of the community.

Master Builders is already at work drawing up the blueprints which should be ready in May. By the end of June it is anticipated that contracts will be let for bids on the various phases of construction. Already, soil core samples have been taken by Geotechnical Services, Inc. (GSI) who will then determine the soil density and other factors so that the foundations can be appropriately designed for the load of the new structures. *(Photo on page 2)* In addition, Niobrara Valley Consultants has

(See Palace on page 2)

(Council from page 1)

from the city to the bars is being worked on.

The following is a partial listing of events from council meetings in March and April.

- Housing Committee members are: Greg Lohmeyer, Kathy Kietzman, Doug Mueller, Diane Buoy, Gary McNaught, and Denise Crofutt.
- Complete listing of Elva McCullough's gifts to the city include: cemetery - \$25,000, Community Center - \$10,000, Long Pine Education Center - \$10,000, Heritage House - \$10,000. These are in addition to the \$45,000 she gave to the Fire Department and Palace.
- LRD Mowers, of Long Pine, has a three-year contract to mow the cemetery.
- Sheri Schulte was appointed temporary City Clerk to replace the retiring Beverly Newport.
- An Interlocal Agreement was finalized between the city and the Long Pine Foundation that was - according to Rod Palmer, the city attorney - "Relevant and beneficial to both parties." This agreement (commonly used in similar community projects) provides that if money is temporarily - but promptly - needed to fund a portion of the Palace Project, the city would take out a loan for just the amount needed, and that amount - plus interest - would then be paid back by the Foundation.
- Although the overhead light at the junction of the spur and Highway 120 is outside the city limits, Long Pine is billed each month by the state for its upkeep. Randy High quipped that, "All the state did was put it up and allow us to pay for it." The city is going to try to rectify the situation.
- The city's grader will be used to make a track behind the school for a tractor pull during Long Pine Days.
- The remaining funds in the CDBG account will be used to pursue legal action against those who haven't paid off their CDBG loans.

(Palace from page 1)

been contracted to survey the property.

Even though the City Hall, Palace, and Fire Hall may have construction work going on at the same time, emphasis will be placed on getting the Fire Hall completed first so that the fire trucks will have a place to park before the freezing weather arrives this winter. Completion of the whole project is anticipated for the fall of 2008.

Concerning finances, the \$30,000 USDA grant the Foundation had applied for was approved. It will be paid when the project is completed.

The Long Pine Foundation is planning a new fundraiser titled "Etched in Time." Bricks that are placed on specific locations of the buildings will be engraved with the buyer's message. More details to come.

If anyone has a fundraising idea, please contact Linda

What Really Happened

A house that \$15,000 of CDBG money was applied to in 1997 is still being lived in. It wasn't burned down as has been rumored. *Reference: Book of Deeds 64, pages 233 and 234, Brown County Clerks office.* The house the applicant had previously owned, was deeded to the city and \$2,500 of CDBG money went to the fire department to burn it down. *Reference: City Council minutes from the Fall of 1997.*



Employees of GSI, Omaha, taking core soil samples, on 5 April, for analysis of the soil under the site where the foundations of the fire hall and city offices will be built.

Salon J

Last summer, Jennifer (Welke) Nickless, decided she wanted to set up her own beauty salon. Seeing that a ready to go building was available in Long Pine, she bought it and set up her own salon that she calls "Salon J".

The building, which was built in the mid-90's by Norris Anderson for Ginger Pierce, had been vacant for about five years, but with a little dusting and getting the water and electricity turned on, it was ready to go.

There were two chairs in the building, but she pulled one and in it's place, installed a frog chair that is used for kids, said Jennifer. This spring, Jennifer decided to "add my own touch" and replaced the linoleum floor to make the place more "homey".

Jennifer grew up just north of Long Pine with parents Gary and Sandy Welke (Long Pine's rural mail carriers). She studied at Joseph's College of Beauty in Norfolk and has had twelve years of working experience - including five years at New Images in Bassett - before setting up shop in Long Pine.

Besides the chance to have her own business, she decided to come to Long Pine because it was closer to home in Ainsworth where she and her husband, Justin (who works at Daniels Mfg.) and kids live. In addition, being in Long Pine puts her between her clients who are in both Ainsworth and Bassett, as well as Long Pine.

Jennifer's schedule is: Monday and Wednesday 9 to 5, Thursday 1 to 9, Friday 8:30 to 1, and the salon is open every other Saturday. To make room for those who can't make it during those hours, she "Will stay late if the customer's hours don't work."

Concerning her move to Long Pine, Jennifer said, "I just love the people here. They knock on the window and wave as they go by."



New Person at Post Office

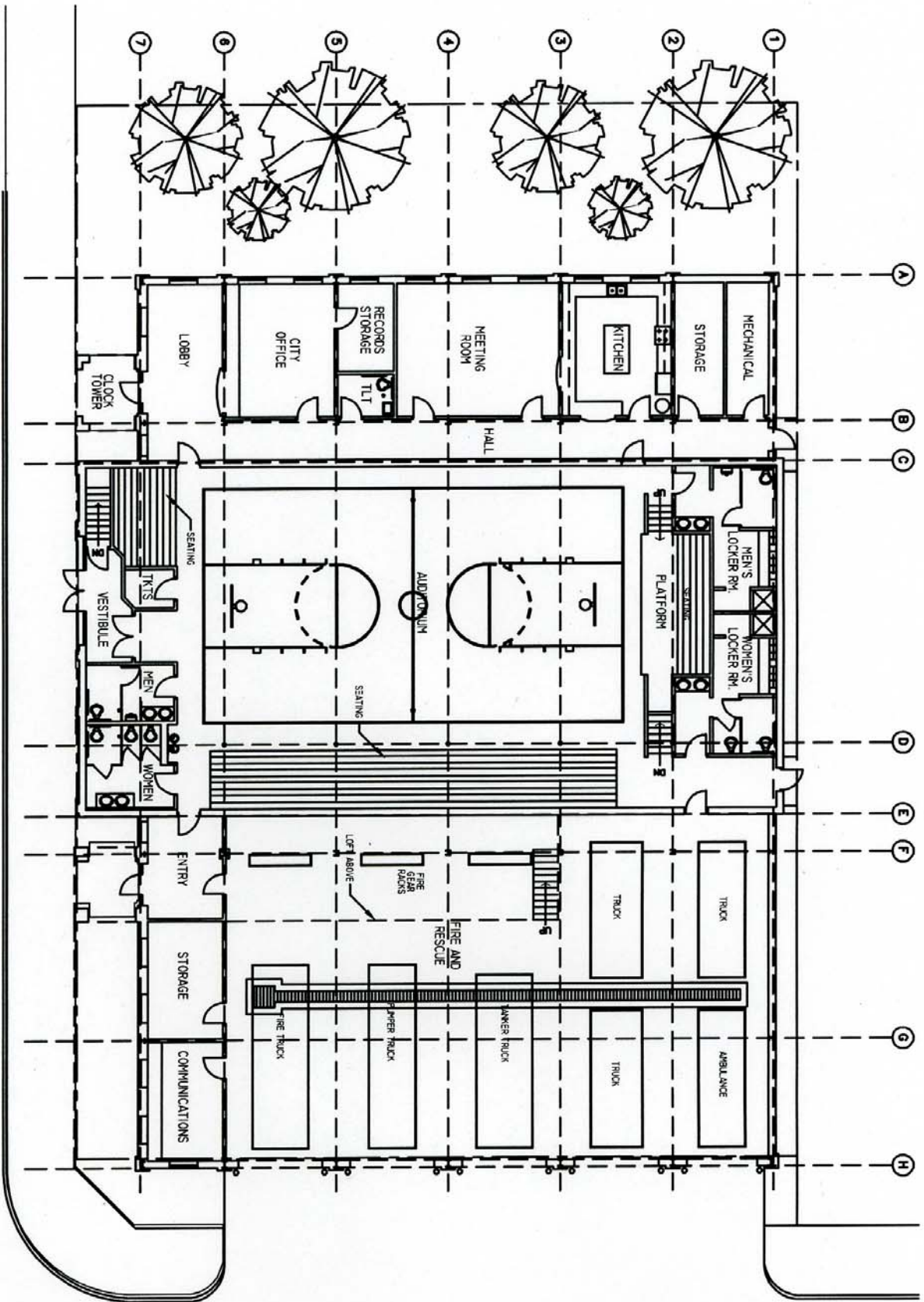
Neida Mueller (on the left) has recently been appointed to the position of Post Master Relief (PMR) for the Long Pine Post Office, according to Barbara Steskal (right), Long Pine's Post Master.

As PMR, Mueller, who with her husband Doug live in Long Pine, will fill in at the Post Office doing whatever post office people do when Steskal is absent.

Mueller has been getting some in-house training in long Pine, and made two trips to North Platte for official training prior to starting her official duties on 28 April.

Deb Zacharias, who had been the previous Long Pine PMR for fifteen years, has become a postal carrier in Ainsworth.





 NORTH **FLOOR PLAN**



Exterior Renderings

Fire Hall and Community Center Long Pine, Nebraska



Fire Department

At an informal meeting at Smoky's on 10 April, several firemen were recognized for their years of service as members of the Long Pine Fire Department. From the left: Phil Brown - Rookie of the Year, Dennis Deweese - 35 years, Kenny Turpin - five years, Steve Swett - 25 years, and Gerald Denny - 25 years.

Earlier, on the 7th, the firemen held their Annual Easter Egg Hunt. It was a clear, sunny day, but the hunt, which was planned for Keller Park in Long Pine, had to be taken to the Palace because of the bitter wind chill. The indoor setting didn't provide as many hiding places, but it was nice having the Palace as a backup.

In related news, Long Pine doesn't have an ambulance anymore. Increased training

requirements for new recruits, an increase in the number of EMTs (three) required to make an emergency run, and only three certified EMTs left in Long Pine, combined to cause Brown County Ambulance to pull the ambulance back to Ainsworth. On the plus side, there's one more door behind which another fire truck can park.

Even though Long Pine no longer has an ambulance, we're well covered by the Ainsworth ambulance crews. There are currently 27 EMTs in the Brown County Ambulance Association, with four three-person crews that weekly rotate the duties out of Ainsworth.

Remember too, that if you are picked up on an emergency run in Long Pine, you (or someone speaking for you) have the choice of the ambulance delivering you to either the Bassett or Ainsworth hospitals.



Jr. American Legion

The Jr. American Legion #260 held their Annual Bake Sale at the Long Pine Vet's Club on, Saturday, 7 April.

Muffins, cookies, cakes, cupcakes, and pies were sold to help build up the organization's treasury for a planned trip to the water park in Grand Island, according to Jennifer Gum, President of the local Legion chapter.

As stated in organization literature, the purpose of the Jr. American Legion is to promote volunteerism in various programs and services involving veterans and communities. Through this involvement, members earn credit for their volunteer work and meet other girls. Locally, according to Jennifer Gum, the Long Pine girls volunteer their time twice a year to clean up the spur into Long Pine, and have helped raise and lower the flags at the cemetery on Memorial Day.

For further information, contact Jennifer at 273-4331, or the Legion's advisor, Neida Mueller at 273-3663.

Long Pine Days

The Long Pine Chamber of Commerce is getting ready to host another Long Pine Days on Saturday, 9 June 2007.

The events will be the same as last year, with one notable addition: A tractor pull. This event was set up by James Dillon and will involve only antique tractors pulling on a track set up behind the school. The events - except where noted - will be held on Main Street.

The tentative schedule is:

11:00.....Parade

12:00.....Meadow Muffin contest

1:00.....Tractor Pull behind the school

4:00.....Duck races on Pine Creek

5:30.....BBQ

6:30.....Cowboy poets

7:30.....Steve Hanson and "The Not Ready For Long Pine" bluegrass band at the Pavilion in Hidden Paradise.

6

Throughout the day, there will be a craft fair in

Tourism Committee

The Long Pine Tourism Committee met on 12 March to Discuss ways of pulling tourists into the city. First on the agenda was the promotional brochure that is distributed throughout the state to promote Long Pine. James and Lisa Dillon, Randy High, Diane Buoy, Jean James, Phyllis and Henry Thorne, Donna Ellis, and Jim and Nancy Carley (All being interested parties ... there is no membership) looked at the current brochure and made recommendations that reflect changes to local businesses, telephone numbers, and in places to stay. The brochure will be printed by Simple Solutions and then distributed at the state-wide brochure swap in Hastings on 10 May.

Also reviewed was the Long Pine DVD that can be viewed on a TV. It will also be updated with added short clips of interior views of the lounges. In addition, portions of the video may be added to the official Long Pine website, www.cityoflongpine.org

In an effort to encourage tourists to stay in the city, suggestions were sought as to how best to increase the occupancy rate at the city operated, under-occupied, Bunk House along the Cowboy Trail. Randy High said he would bring the subject up at the next city council meeting with the suggestion that the two bars - Smokey's and Sandhills Lounge - handle the bookings.

Phyllis Thorne announced that an updated Long Pine Coloring Book will make it's way to the local businesses before the tourist season starts.

Cleaning up the spur was discussed. It's a constant effort to keep the unsightly trash from piling up, but between the Jr. American Legion girls, and other volunteers who get disgusted with the sight when coming into Long Pine, it is kept under control.

The Oil Well Fighters

A Texas oil company was working on a wellhead, when fire suddenly broke out. The fire was so intense that the men couldn't get it under control.

In desperation, the company foreman started calling area oil well fire fighters but couldn't find anyone that wasn't already occupied. Finally, he called a new company that he had heard about, and they said they would send some men out right away.

The foreman was relieved when shortly, she saw a pickup arriving to the scene at a high rate of speed. To his surprise, however, the truck didn't slow down as it approached the fire. His surprise turned to horror when he saw that the truck kept on going right into the flames. The truck finally came to a halt and the men in the back of the pickup piled out and started beating down the flames. In a short amount of time the fire was extinguished.

When the smoke had cleared, the foreman drove over to where the men were and told them was very pleased with their unorthodox, but very effective, fire fighting technique. He thanked the men as he handed them a very generous check for their work.

Knowing this was probably one of their first jobs as fire fighters, the oil company foreman asked what they were going to do with the money.

The head firefighter replied, "The first thing we're going to do is get those brakes fixed."

As told by Doc White

And,

- * If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.
- * The early bird gets the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.
- * Experience is something you don't get until after you need it.
- * What's the speed of dark?
- * I almost had a psychic girlfriend, but she left me before we met.

Brown County Population Increase

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (www.census.gov/popest/counties), the estimated population - 3,354 - of Brown County on 1 July 2006 showed there were nineteen more people in the county than one year earlier on 1 July 2005. This is the first time that Brown County's population has increased since there was a short rise in population in 1991 and 92 to 3,676. Of course these are estimates, but the numbers look good. The next full scale census will take place in 2010.

Road Repairs by The Pines

If you've gone by The Pines on your way out of town, you've noticed the holes on the west end of the Pine Creek bridge.

According to Russ Dodd, Brown County Commissioner, crushed concrete has been placed in some of the holes to smooth out the road until the weather warms up so a permanent fill of paving material can be applied.

Letter to the Editor

Now that winter is over, we would like to recognize and thank the people who made living in Long Pine a lot easier during snow "incidents"

First to our city crew: Steve Warnke and Larry Svenson. They were out way before daylight getting the initial plowing done. Within a couple of days, the bulk of our streets were driveable. In contrast, the other area towns were awful. Some of their side streets weren't plowed until almost a week later. Also their main streets still had piled snow down the middle.

Secondly, to area residents for clearing driveways and sidewalks for people who couldn't help themselves. We saw many tractors, Bobcats, snow blowers, etc., running around town clearing snow. People like Jack Roark, Mike Lehn, Lloyd Mundorf, Al Graves, Eric Denny, Gerald Denny, James Dillon, and Dave Priest were busy helping others who needed it. We realize there were others doing what they could to help, but we don't know everyone's names and we apologize for that.

Gary and Sharron

Business Happenings

- The Pines will be opening for business around 15 May, according to Diette Glenn. Diette is looking for some help. Call 402-841-1444.
- Olivia Crabb is moving her sewing operation to her home. She has closed the General Store on Main Street due to health reasons. She can be reached at 273-0188.
- Randy High and Diane Buoy have opened up a wood working business - HB Woodworking - next to their home at 799 North Main. 760-2040.
- Lynn Robertson and Becky Bodmer will soon be opening the "Pine Creek Crossing" in the old Thrift Store building. It will "Provide a diverse product line of new, used, and antique items, plus art, internet sales, and a comfortable coffee house setting for enjoying beverages and good conversation", said Lynn.
- The Pour House has closed.

The Long Pine Journal is published every once in a while by Henry Thorne who is solely responsible for the research, writing, editing, photographs, and errors. It is printed - with great appreciation - by the RC&D in Bassett, and is distributed through businesses in town. It is also available in the lobby of the post office. The next issue might come out this fall sometime.

I would dearly like to have positive articles written by and/or ideas from people living in and around Long Pine.

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James Dillon loading branches into the city truck during a break in the weather during March.