

# OUR TOWNS

## Hartington

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## Gala Gears Up For Fundraising Fun

### 15th Annual Catholic Schools Benefit Is Saturday

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HARTINGTON, Neb. — Area residents will have a chance to place bids on more than 770 items this weekend, and benefit four schools at the same time.

On Saturday, March 20, Cedar County Catholic Schools will hold its 15th annual Gala and Grand Auction at the Msgr. Werner Activity Center in Hartington.

Funds will go toward East Catholic Elementary in Bow Valley, West Catholic Elementary in Fordyce, Holy Trinity Elementary and Cedar Catholic Jr.-Sr. High School, both in Hartington.

"We have everything you would want, like a department store," said gala chairman Joani Potts.

The doors will open at 5 p.m. so guests can view the auction items, and will be seated approximately 45 minutes later for a dinner at 6 p.m.

"Usually, we're efficient enough to get them all served in about 20 minutes," Potts said.

The bidding will start around 7 p.m., with a grain auction.

"We have a little over 8,000

bushels of corn," Potts said. "We'd like to have 10,000. I'm hoping to get that yet."

Concurrent to the grain auction, the silent auction will begin.

"We have about 600 items on the silent auction," Potts said. "Everything you can imagine. Beautiful gift baskets. People really have enjoyed putting together some fun baskets, and a lot of other items."

The live auction will begin after the grain auction concludes. It is overseen by Miller, Creamer, Heimes, Janssen Auctioneers.

Potts said the silent auction will be closed in three sections, the first being at 8:15 p.m.

"We call for final bids, and that gets to be a lot of fun because, depending on certain items, people have their pencils right there ready to scratch in a bid ahead of somebody else," she said.

The live auction will continue through the night, concluding at approximately 11:15 p.m.

"Our big-ticket items this year will be \$3,000," Potts said.

"We've got so many fantastic gifts. Our featured gifts this year are a trip to Las Vegas for four couples, a Western Caribbean

cruise for two and we have four Lake of the Woods walleye fishing trips."

Gift donations begins in the summer, with more than 30 couples and individuals helping to take donations in various capacities, Potts said.

"There's always something creative," she said. "This year, we have a redneck dinner that sounds like a lot of fun. We have just beautiful gift baskets, novelty items, practical items for home and yard — we've got a couple grills, we've got patio furniture, we've got a dishwasher — (as well as) furniture and hunting items."

When the Gala began 15 years ago, 100 items were up for bidding.

Potts said she was surprised by the response it garnered.

"It was a big hit," she said. "We had about 350 people attend. It was fun, they liked it and it just took off."

The Gala has grown incrementally since that time, with more auction items each year.

In total, the event has earned more than \$1.67 million for the schools.

"They count on it," Potts said. "It's essential for their budgets." The money raised has gone



TRAVIS GULBRANDSON/P&D  
Sandy Loecker and Mary Lou Noecker gather pages for the "Gala book," which organizes information about the Cedar County Catholic Schools Gala and Grand Auction, which will take place March 20 in Hartington, Neb.

toward everything from scholarships and learning programs to building renovations and the schools' general funds.

There isn't a dollar goal the schools are trying to meet. They just want to earn what they can.

"The whole essence of it is we'll just all work hard together and pray," Potts said. "Everything you see really is founded in faith and it's been blessed. That's the real premise of it."

Apart from the general expansion of the event during the past 15 years, its venue has changed as well, moving from the Jr.-Sr. High School gym to the activity center in 2007.

"We were so tight in (the

gym)," Potts said. "It was just packed with gifts and people. It really was a huge progression to get the new activity center. Now we've got room and it's much more comfortable."

Potts said the event couldn't be pulled off without the organizational work of the chairpersons from each school, and from the volunteer hours donated by area residents.

Last Friday, a group of volunteers helped to put together the "Gala book," which organizes information about the Gala, its donations and donors.

"It's a very worthy cause, so it's very fulfilling to get to help our Catholic schools," said volun-

teer Bette Becker. "My kids go here, so I'm helping them at the same time."

"I've been with it 15 years and it's just a lot of fun," Potts said of the event. "It's work, but it's fun."

For more information, contact the Cedar Catholic Schools and Parishes Development Office at (402) 254-3912.

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## School Crisis Management Course Set For Cedar Co.

In the event of a school-based incident, school administrators, rural law enforcement officers, and other emergency responders must be prepared to act quickly and precisely to take control of the situation.

The Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium (RDPC) is providing these and others responsible for school security in Cedar County with crisis management training on how to effectively respond to an emergency involving a school building or an entire school system.

RDPC will be delivering a free Department of Homeland Security (DHS)-certified course, AWR Crisis Management for School-Based Incidents: Partnering Rural Law Enforcement and the Local School Systems, on Wednesday, April 14, running from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., that will give participants a foundation of knowledge and

skills to progressively establish a school-based emergency response plan and crisis management team through information sharing and training.

The eight-hour, instructor-led course was developed by the Ohio-based University of Findlay, an academic partner for RDPC, specifically for school administrators and emergency responders. This awareness level course provides an opportunity for rural law enforcement and school personnel to develop a partnership with regard to school safety through effective collaborative planning, preparedness, communication, and coordination of resources.

Other targeted audience members include emergency management, emergency medical services, fire services, governmental administrative, law enforcement, public safety communications, and public works.

All training delivered by RDPC is certified by DHS and is offered tuition-free for a broad scope of stakeholders in qualifying jurisdictions, including the traditional emergency response disciplines, and other emergency response functions as defined by the National Response Framework, as well as critical infrastructure owners and operators.

To see if space is still available for this course, or to request additional course deliveries for your area, go to [www.ruraltraining.org/view/upcoming-courses](http://www.ruraltraining.org/view/upcoming-courses).

RDPC is a U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Training and Exercises Integration Division partnership of academic institutions with a vision of creating an environment wherein rural communities across America will have the knowledge, skills and abilities

necessary to enhance the safety, security and quality of life for their citizens.

Current members of the Consortium include East Tennessee State University, Eastern Kentucky University, The University of Findlay, Iowa Central Community College, NorthWest Arkansas Community College, and North Carolina Central University. Each of these institutions possesses extensive and unique capabilities relating to rural emergency preparedness training.

For further information, contact Jo Brosius, Director of Communications at (859) 622-6445, or e-mail the Consortium at [info@ruraltraining.org](mailto:info@ruraltraining.org). You may also visit the Consortium web site at [www.ruraltraining.org](http://www.ruraltraining.org).

To schedule this or any other RDPC training, contact the RDPC at (877) 855-7372.

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## EMS Workshop Scheduled For Hartington

HARTINGTON, Neb. — The Emergency Medical Services Program of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services will offer a workshop on "Mock Scenarios" for emergency medical technicians and first responders. The workshop will be held at the

Hartington Ambulance Hall from 7-10 p.m. on Wednesday, March 24.

The workshop is worth three continuing education hours.

For more information, contact Carrie Crawford, Northeast Nebraska Emergency Medical Specialist, at 1-877-277-3609.

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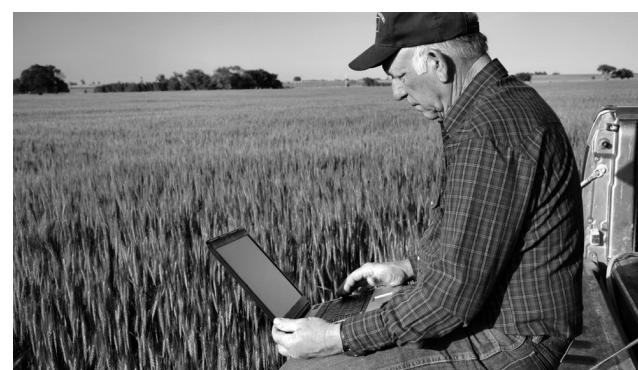
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