

OUR TOWNS

Cedar County

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OLYMPIC PLUNGE



PHOTO: ROSE ROLFES
Heidi Klug, left, helps Bailey Kuchta navigate with a basketball on a plunger to shoot it in during the Wynot Homecoming Olympics, held last Wednesday at the Wynot gym. The games are sponsored each year by the high school and are a popular staple of the school's homecoming festivities.

HCC Exchange Student Feels At Home

BY TRAVIS GULBRANDSON
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HARTINGTON, Neb. — When Manjana Tausenfreund learned she would be attending school in the United States as an exchange student, she assumed she would live in a big city.

Then she learned she would be going to Hartington's Cedar Catholic High School. "At first I was a bit scared, and not too happy," she said. "But then I e-mailed the family and saw pictures, and I was so glad I had a good family."

Tausenfreund, 17, arrived from northern Germany on Aug. 19 to stay with her host parents, Pat and Julie Steffen of Fordyce. "They're very nice," she said.

Her first impressions of the area were of the farms that dotted the endless landscape. Although she's used to it now, Tausenfreund said it differs greatly from where she was raised.

"It's not a big city, but five minutes from me is the city. It's more house-on-house, and not so spaced, like here," she said.

The system of education also differs from what Tausenfreund is used to. In Germany, she attends Gymnasium, which places a strong emphasis on academic learning, preparing students to enter a university.

"I think the teachers are nicer here, and not so strict," she said. "It's not always learn, learn, learn. There's talking, it's more fun."

Also, unlike Cedar Catholic, Gymnasium is not a religious institution.

"We don't talk about religion at all," Tausenfreund said.

It all serves to reinforce the newness of everything she's experiencing, she said.

"Everything is new for me," Tausenfreund said. "At home we don't have volleyball games and things like that, all the sports. Everything is exciting (here)."

But Tausenfreund's time in the United States won't be completely related to school. Once the academic year is finished, she will have the opportunity to visit an area of her choice.

"The (exchange student) organization said I can go to the East Coast, the West Coast or Hawaii. I want to go to the West Coast," she said.

Tausenfreund became involved with the exchange program more than a year ago, when she saw an advertisement for it in a magazine. After a long application process, she was accepted, and soon began preparing for her time here.

"In February I had a week where I learned about the program, and (what I'd be doing over) the year," she said.



TRAVIS GULBRANDSON/P&D
Manjana Tausenfreund is a German exchange student who is attending Cedar Catholic High School in Hartington this year. She is wearing a costume for "Hillbilly Day," one of Cedar Catholic's homecoming week dress-up days.

It's an experience Tausenfreund recommends to everyone who has the opportunity.

"I would say they should do it. You only have one chance in your life. When you get older, you can't do it anymore," she said.

Tausenfreund will return to Germany in June, after which time she will return to her old school.

Neb. Candidates Make Pitch To Early Voters

BY MARGERY A. BECK
Associated Press Writer

LINCOLN, Neb. — With early voting allowing Nebraska residents to cast their ballots more than a month before Election Day, candidates are finding ways to target those early birds through mailings, ads and door-to-door efforts.

People have been able to request absentee ballots for decades, but only since the state law changed in 1999 have they been allowed to submit their ballots early without giving a reason. The number of early ballots cast has soared since.

"Every campaign should have a good early vote program," said Dave Boomer, campaign manager for the 2nd District GOP incumbent, Rep. Lee Terry. "If they don't, the manager should be sued for malpractice."

Campaigns receive updated lists of registered voters, said Dave Phipps, an election commissioner for Douglas County. The lists also tell the campaigns who has requested absentee ballots, allowing them to target their mailings to arrive well before Election Day.

Campaign staffs can also use the lists to solicit donations and

volunteers — even cross off early voters from automated campaign call and door-to-door lists.

Campaigns have urged voters in recent years to vote early, Phipps said.

"It's a campaign strategy that can work," Phipps said. "If you can convince somebody to request an early voting ballot, that's probably going to be a vote for you."

Campaign managers for Nebraska's 2nd House District race acknowledged that early voting plays into their strategy.

Boomer, campaign manager for the 2nd District Republican Rep. Lee Terry, said he tracks early voting trends to target voters.

Ian Russell, campaign manager for Democratic challenger Tom White, said he has a plan to get White's voters to the polls either on Election Day or earlier, although he declined to detail that plan.

Before the law changed, an average of 3,000 to 5,000 people cast early ballots in elections in Douglas County — the state's most populous with more than 500,000 people. In the 2008 general election, with full-fledged early voting allowed, that had skyrocketed to 60,000.

Hearing Set Next Month On Courtroom Cameras Issue In S.D.

PIERRE — The South Dakota Supreme Court will take public testimony next month on two proposals regarding cameras in the state's circuit courtrooms.

The input at the Oct. 7 meeting in Pierre will help guide the high court as it prepares to choose between the two proposed rules, The Argus Leader said. One presumes proceedings are open to media recordings; the other would require the media to petition for the right to make audio or video recordings. A committee of representa-

tives from the media, judicial system and law enforcement met late last year to discuss the issue. The majority voted to recommend the more restrictive rule change, which was written by Judge David Gienapp of Madison.

His proposal would require media organizations to get approval a week in advance and give veto power to the judge and attorneys involved. Gienapp said he thinks it is important to bring everyone in on the decision because a defendant's rights are

more important than media access.

"From a judge's perspective, you're more concerned about both sides getting a fair trial than anything else," he said.

The South Dakota Newspaper Association has sent a letter to the Supreme Court supporting the proposal that presumes the courts are open to cameras, Executive Director David Bordewyk said. Requiring media groups to petition for cameras in trial courts "is unworkable," he said.

EMS Workshop Set For Wynot

WYNOT — The Emergency Medical Services Program of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services will offer a workshop on "Farm Emergencies" for emergency medical technicians and first responders. The workshop will be held at the Wynot Fire Hall from 7-10 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 21.

The workshop is worth three continuing education hours.

For more information, contact Carrie Crawford, Northeast Nebraska Emergency Medical Specialist, at 1-877-227-3609.

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