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SERVING PROUDLY SINCE 1873 AS THE BEAUTIFUL NEBRASKA PANHANDLE'S FIRST NEWSPAPER

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## RUNNING FOR A REASON



AARON BURNETT / THE SUN-TELEGRAPH

**"TORCH RUN, torch run, say it proud. Torch run, torch run, say it loud,"** echoed through the streets of Sidney Wednesday afternoon as representatives from the final leg of the Law Enforcement Torch Run for the 2010 Special Olympics USA National Games. A 110-member team of Special Olympic participants, law enforcement officers and support team members from across the nation are carrying the "Flame of Hope" throughout the state on their way to the games' opening ceremony in Lincoln. The 2010 Special Olympics USA National Games will be July 18 through July 23 and will feature nearly 3,000 athletes participating in 13 Olympic-style sports.

## 'Get Out The Vote'

Secretary Of State On Mission To Increase Voter Turnout

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SIDNEY – After only 22 percent of eligible voters statewide participated in the May primary election, Secretary of State John Gale decided it was time to launch a "get out the vote" campaign leading up to the general election in November.

"I was very concerned about the turnout across the state," Gale said. He added that while the Third District, which encompasses the western half of the state, generally has the highest rate of voter participation, the Second District, which is in and around Omaha, had the lowest turnout at just 9 percent.

"Here at home we see this continued slide of voter participation and good candidate participation," Gale said.

The secretary of state said several factors likely contributed to the low rate of participation, including a perceived lack of compelling races at the top of the ticket and because the election is a mid-term election.

Gale noted that even when the top of the ticket races, such as for governor or senator, are not heavily-contested, local items and races can often come down to one or two votes. The state's top election official added that in more than one county, candidates for sheriff were tied in the primary and the election had to be determined by the county clerk with a game of chance.

"Vote the ticket top to bottom. Just do a little homework," Gale said.

He added that voters should not be intimidated by going to the polls. Information on candidates and issues is readily available leading up to elections, allowing for citizens to grasp a solid understanding of issues and stances prior to voting, said Gale.

For citizens that do not want to or cannot make it to the polls on election day, absentee and mail-in ballots are available, said Gale. He noted that voting early or absentee is a straight forward and easy process.

"It's as easy as sending a birthday card to your mother."

Gale said one of the areas that he has been focusing on to improve voter participation has been with new voters and college-age voters. The secretary of state said he has been working closely with colleges throughout the state to increase voter registration and to foster a sense of involvement in the electoral process.

"If we can reach our young citizens that are just getting involved, we'll begin building continual participation."

Gale noted that increased participation levels for young citizens will lay a foundation for the future of the state, eventually providing the state with its future leaders. The secretary of state reiterated the importance that citizens become involved and stay involved in government throughout all of its levels.

"We're only going to have a strong nation if we're all involved."



It's as easy as sending a birthday card to your mother."  
**JOHN GALE**

## Roofing Jobs Pick Up In Sidney

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SIDNEY – Severe thunderstorms have taken a toll on the roofs of Sidney residents. With summer being a prime season for roofing jobs, City Inspector Jim Pelster brought a proposed ordinance requiring that roofer contractors carry a city-issued license.

Pelster said the ordinance would help provide an extra layer of protection for Sidney citizens as out-of-town contractors come to the area looking for jobs in the aftermath of storms. One such company, Trinity Restoration, Inc., has worked with city officials to provide them requested documentation such as references, insurance amounts and business information.

Pelster was able to meet with the Colorado-based contractor because the city requires that all roofing jobs be permitted.

"The reason for that is that with all these outsiders coming in to do roofing, that brings them into this office to talk with me so I can ask them questions and get the information I need," Pelster told The Sun-Telegraph on Thursday. "Another thing is that the building code calls for permits required on roofing



JIM PELSTER / FOR THE SUN-TELEGRAPH

**THIS WEATHER station recorded a wind speed of 95.5 at 6:01 p.m. on July 6. Many roofs in the county have been damaged by storms that have hammered the Panhandle this summer.**

because there are certain codes that roofing has to meet."

As of Thursday morning, Pelster said he had issued seven permits for roofing jobs since July 1. The inspector said he normally sees a spike in the number of roof jobs during the summer months.

During council discussion on Tuesday about the proposed ordinance, Councilman Wendall Gaston said he was approached by a man who claimed to fix roofs, although he sold fish on the side. Another salesman said he had shingles to sell if Gaston was willing to buy.

Should council accept and pass the ordinance, all roofers, including local contractors, would be required to carry the city-issued license before completing any work. Penalties are included in the ordinance for instances in which the law is broken.

Roofing jobs may be in higher demand this year due to heavy rainfall, large hail and damaging winds accompanying summer thunderstorms. Pelster said his home weather station recorded a wind speed of 95.5 mph during the July 6 storm that also saw a Burlington Northern-Santa Fe derailment on the U.S. Highway 30 overpass. Sidney has lucked out by receiving smaller hail than what has been reported in other Panhandle communities, but roof age plays a factor in how damaged it can become during a storm, Pelster said.

## State Patrol Warns Of Craigslist Car Scam

FOR THE SUN-TELEGRAPH

LINCOLN – The Nebraska State Patrol is urging citizens to be aware of fraudulent automobile sale ads that have been appearing on Craigslist. The motor vehicles in question are listed for sale by out-of-state owners.

Investigators with the Nebraska State Patrol Auto Fraud Division say they have received several complaints from Nebraska residents who have lost money due to these types of scams. The victims have provided payment for vehicles only to find out the vehicle

does not exist, nor does the individual they were communicating with. Individuals placing the ads appear to be Nigerian scam artists operating overseas.

"These are tough situations for the individuals involved," said NSP Auto Fraud Investigator

Gene True. "They are out a good deal of money, and because the individuals they were dealing with are out of the country there are very few options for prosecution."

The Nebraska State Patrol  
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#### COMING SATURDAY

Klark Byrd keeps you up to speed on all of the latest technology with his weekly column, Plugged In.

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## Jaycees Need Help For Mud Drag; New Event Coming To Fair

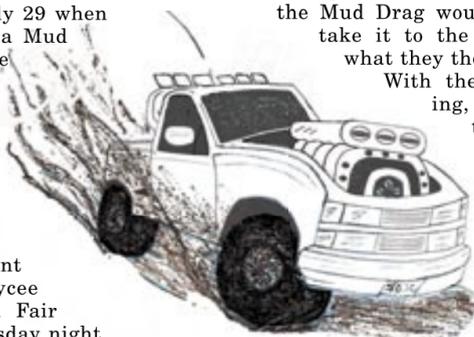
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SIDNEY – It will be a downright muddy affair on July 29 when the Sidney Jaycees host a Mud Drag competition at the Cheyenne County Fair. That is the night drivers will attempt to make a 200-yard run, tire-deep in the mud.

Event coordinator and Sidney Jaycee Josephine Bruce said the idea to bring a new event was seeded when Jaycee Ken Steffens received a Fair Board request for a Thursday night event. Steffens discussed it with other Jaycees, who immediately drummed up a barrel of ideas.

"I thought that doing a tough truck competi-

tion or a Mud Bog would go over well and draw a crowd that would help both the Jaycees and our county fair," Bruce said. "We all thought the Mud Drag would be a good idea to take it to the Fair Board and see what they thought."



With the Fair Board's blessing, the local community organization set about arranging the event.

Now that drivers have filled out registration forms, available on the Sidney Jaycee website, and the event day draws closer, the Jaycees are getting the word out in hopes of filling the grand stands.

The event will take place on the fair grounds where two 20-foot wide, 200-foot long lanes of mud await drivers, who are instructed to sign in by 5 p.m. on the day of the event with no more than a two-person pit crew.

Bruce said the event will begin at 6 p.m. The winners will be determined by the longest run, but in the event that both drivers make the complete run, the winner will be determined by fastest time. Places will be awarded through third place in Stock, Modified Stock and ATV classes. Various other prizes await for exhibition and powder puff categories.

The Jaycees could use a little help for the event, Bruce said. Hay, straw or grass bales for use as a safety barricade 15 feet from the pits are needed. Bruce said the bales could be returned if undamaged, while a fair price would be paid for damaged bales.

For more information and a rules list, visit the Sidney Jaycee website at <http://www.sidneyjaycees.com>.