

GRAVEL

(Continued from A1)

Nelson then suggested that an option the board might explore could potentially include putting out a bid at two different levels for grades of gravel to see what would come back.

"These specs that are put together by the state, you know, these are put together by people that know a lot more about gravel than what I do," Pawling said.

Nunnenkamp reiterated that he still would recommend putting out bids for better gravel to see what that would cost, to which Nelson stated that this spec was what was considered overall "road gravel" and encouraged the board to take into account that most gravel in nearby areas might be hard to come by with it being shipped in all directions to aid in flood relief.

"Most of the time it's better than what they state as a minimum," Pawling said.

Through literature found by Commissioner Becky Richter, given to her the day Pawling addressed the board on the findings of the gravel study, it was proven that by 78 percent passing through the respective sieve it actually meant that 78 percent of the gravel tested was too large to pass through -- therefore "passing" the test.

"I think you're reading it in reverse," Nelson stated.

Nunnenkamp said that was just the way he had understood it when it was explained during the presentation.

"When it says 78 percent passing, that means it didn't flunk, it passed," Pawling reported.

After Pawling asked for direction from the board on bidding for gravel, Commissioner Bobby Parks posed a question.

"So when you do a request for bid and you request road gravel, do they have various gradients of road gravel or is there just road gravel?" she asked.

"There's just road gravel," Pawling confirmed. Pawling's request was later approved.

Also brought to attention by Nunnenkamp was a concern related to him by a resident of Phillips regarding a minimum maintenance road. Further discussion ensued regarding the condition of the road, what has been done, financial parameters of what could possibly be done on a road of its kind and further potential options for the road's future -- including giving the road back to the village of Phillips. The issue was tabled for later discussion.



News-Register/Kurt Johnson

Equipment upgrade

Construction crews were busy last week's at the Love's Travel Stop location in Aurora, replacing several of the main gas pumps with updated equipment. Love's, an Oklahoma-based company, opened for business in at Aurora's I-80 intersection back in 2003 as the first location in Nebraska at the time.

CRANES

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caused flooding. We didn't get flooded here like other areas, but with the frost coming out of the ground like it did our roads turned into a big, mired mess."

In fact, the two-mile dirt road leading into the sanctuary provides the only access by land. When it became impassable, Rowe officials had no choice but to keep the gates closed.

"When the road is closed there is no access to Rowe other than to walk," Taddicken said. "Even locals who have lived on this road for 70 years said they've never seen it do that."

With so many bookings cancelled during the peak season, Taddicken estimated that Rowe lost approximately \$300,000 in revenue this year.

"All of our funds go toward conversation, education and management of 2,800 acres, so this is going to take a pretty big bite out of operations," he said. "We will encourage donations, but it's not ideal at all."

While muddy roads kept visitors away, many of the faithful volunteers who come from distances near and far to help each year still found their

way in.

"For nearly a week those volunteers walked in two miles, so that's true dedication," he said. "That's the real story here. We can't do this without our volunteers. They are amazing."

David Baasch has a different perspective, and mission, regarding the annual crane migration. As a biologist with Headwaters Corporation, Baasch works year around to create habitat for threatened and endangered species along the Platte River.

"We remove trees and vegetation from the channel and have the ability to release small amounts of water when needed," he explained. "We removed trees in the fall and so the flood happened after that, which actually helped as far as widening the channels. The immediate impact was that the birds were not able to roost on the river, and the birds that got here early were more exposed to predators, like coyotes and bobcats."

'When the road is closed there is no access to Rowe (Sanctuary) other than to walk. Even locals who have lived on this road for 70 years said they've never seen it do that.'

Bill Taddicken, Rowe Sanctuary

Baasch reported that there was no major damage along the river to viewing facilities or the channel itself, so the biggest impact was limited access for bird lovers who come from all over the world to see

the Sandhill Cranes.

"This year was a strange year all the way around," Baasch said. "We had a few birds here early, but mostly they waited to migrate until things warmed up. The birds that normally migrate later showed up the same time they always do in mid to late March, which put record numbers of birds on the Platte River."

Officials estimate that as many as 660,000 Sandhill Cranes converged on the river around March 25, which Baasch said was an amazing sight to see.

Those numbers were down to 500,000 or less late last week, with many cranes visible

as always along Highway 34 between Aurora and Grand Island. Tours were booked at the three Rowe Sanctuary blinds (which can host up to 90 people each morning and evening) ended Sunday, which means bird numbers will now start dwindling fast.

"We'll probably have good cranes here for another week, but you just never know," he said.

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such change will be the date of graduation to May 15, so as to no longer conflict with Mother's Day. The calendar was approved across the board.

In other items, the board: * accepted a letter of resignation from Natalie Starostka; * awarded Cole Carraher a

EASTER EGGS

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Chamber coordinator, explained that they took care of the eggs for the hunt and have plenty of surprises for youngsters.

"The Aurora Chamber of Commerce is honored to be working with the Edgerton on such a huge event," Rhoden said. "We are so grateful for all of our members who donated prizes and coupons to fill the eggs and a huge thank you to the Aurora Mall for donating all the candy to fill the eggs. We have about 5,000 eggs that we are filling with the help of several Aurora High School students. We will also be hiding a special egg that will include a \$20 Chamber check in each age group with \$100 in \$5 Chamber Checks. We encourage everyone to come out and support the Edgerton and our community in whole."

Molliconi finished by saying that all the activities in the Explorit Zone will be available and noted that there are several new ones to take advantage of.

"We have recently added lots of new exhibits in our Explorit Zone so if you haven't been here since Christmas you'll be amazed at all of the new exhibits and activities," she said.

"This event will give families a reason to come visit and explore all of our new exhibits and see how we have updated the center. Families can build a Lego car and race to see which car is the fastest. Our new brain games will challenge you and you can see who has best focus and can use their brain waves the best."

The event is free for Edgerton members and \$8.25 for non-members.

Ricketts signs bill updating states' civics education standards

Gov. Ricketts signed LB 399 on April 1, which updates and renews the public school system's duty to educate students in American civics. The bill, which was introduced by Sen. Julie Slama of Peru, ensures that Nebraska's schools will continue to prepare students to be competent and responsible citizens who engage in public debate knowledgeably.

"To preserve and grow the Good Life, it is imperative that we pass on our legacy of civic freedom and our democratic republic to the next generation," said Gov. Ricketts. "By putting American civics education at the center of our public schools curriculum, LB399 helps our kids gain an appreciation of the freedoms they enjoy and an understanding of how these liberties can

be preserved. Thank you to Senator Slama for her successful efforts to garner such broad support for this important legislation."

LB 399 also invites public transparency whenever a public school district proposes or approves a change to its American civics curriculum.

"LB 399 lays the groundwork to ensure that students have at least been given a

basic introduction to their government," said Sen. Slama. "Our nation's history and government structure is simply too important to take a backseat to other core subjects. This bill represents a promising first step that, regardless of political ideology and urban/rural background, that we can find common ground on issues that had in the past encountered insurmountable division."

Tickets \$10

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