

Your *Country* Neighbor **Free** September 2018

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A Magazine for Small Towns and Rural America



The Nemaha County Rodeo in Auburn on August 10th and 11th; photos on page 12.

More Butterfly Photos pages, 3,5,6,8

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SAMPLER: Selections from the Flatwater Folk Art Museum
Art Exhibition at Falls City Library, Stalder Gallery 9/14-10/27, 2018
Preview & Gallery Talk Friday Sept. 14 from 6 to 7 PM

Your Country Neighbor

Voices and Views From the Valleys of the Nemaha

Publisher & Photographer, Stephen Hassler

Whazzat?!

By Janet Sobczyk, 2012

Guitar Poems

Steve Adams



Sweat struggle sacrifice
Try to have something nice
Do what you think is right
Sweat struggle sacrifice

Boss man says money's tight
Don't make no lay off right
Lay awake half the night
Sweat struggle sacrifice

Try to keep the bills all paid
Working for that minimum wage
Living day to day
Sweat struggle sacrifice

Just want to run away
But I know I have to stay
No where to go anyway
Sweat struggle sacrifice

A family trip
with our four children
from green Nebraska,
a chance to explore
the desert landscape
of Arizona.
The sun was so hot
it melted crayons,
the cactus was tall
and prickly sharp, too.
Hairy, huge spiders,
three-inch cockroaches,
and coiled rattlesnakes
were brand new dangers
for Nebraska kids
used to city life.

At my brother's house
where we stayed a week
our toddler Joe spied
something small and green,
quiet and so quick!
Joe ran to me and
pulled me to the spot,
pointing and panting,
couldn't describe it.
It had vanished but
I'd seen it before.
"Was it this big, Joe?"
I asked with hands out.
"Yes, yes," he nodded.
"Did it have a tail?"
He nodded again.
"Fast!!" he said with a gasp.
"That's a lizard, Joe.
Lizards won't bite you."
He wasn't convinced...
a lizard should not
be loose in a house!

During this trip, toddler Joe was still only saying one or two words at a time, which is why he couldn't describe the critter. Strangely enough, the week after we returned he transitioned to complete sentences. It was weird! He didn't follow the natural progression of speech that our other children did. It seemed like he had been quietly listening and taking in the English language until he had it figured out and could speak fluently.

September Writers

Devon Adams
Steve Adams
Stephen Hassler
Mary Ann Holland
Merri Johnson
Janet Sobczyk
Merlin Wright

Thank You!

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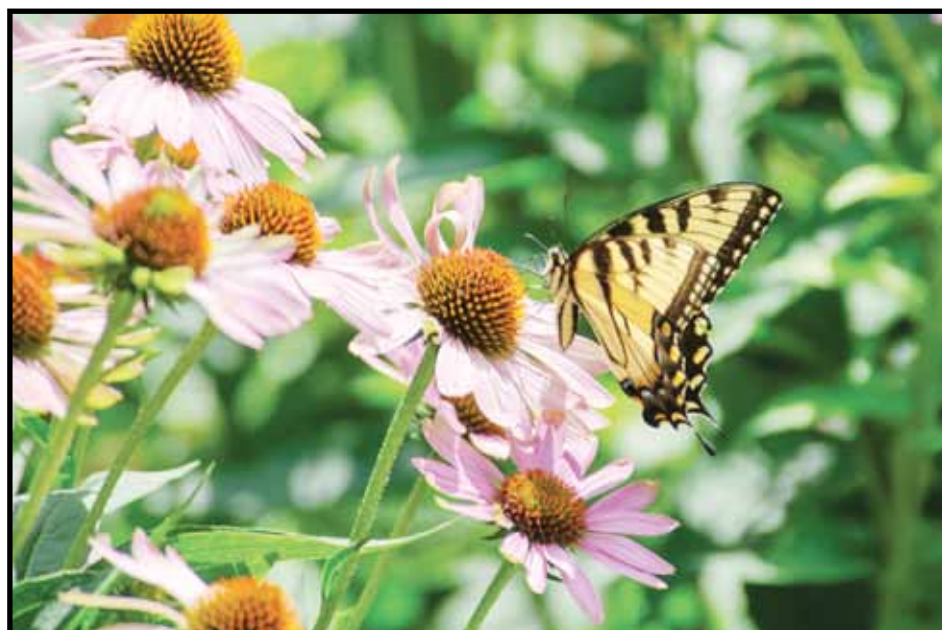


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Tiger Swallowtail on Cone Flower



Monarchs are migrating. This one stopped one evening to rest in my yard.

Window on Fifth Street

This Article Originally Published in 2005
Stephen Hassler

As I look out my window on Fifth Street, the season is “back to school”; school buses, football practice, and cruisin’. The freedom to get in a car and go anywhere I wanted was once just an anxious teenager’s dream. Now, whenever I want, I can take my comfortable sedan with air conditioning and Bose sound and tour the rural countryside or visit friends anywhere. This is one freedom I cherish but often take for granted. Before I received my driver’s license, I didn’t have that freedom of movement.

Before I had a driver’s license, travel was viewed from the back-seat of a ‘57 Ford Fairlane. Often, a parent’s head would obstruct my view, so I just looked out the side window and watched my world go by about 45 miles per hour. There were the ever-changing fields of grain and grasses; the lavender of blooming alfalfa or the gold of ripening oats. Now and then there would be a train passing by on the tracks that ran parallel to the graveled country road.

As my father steered into town, we connected with the highway and coasted down the hill to the traffic light and the drive-in on the corner. High School kids stood around in small groups with their red and black letter-jackets sipping Cokes and Pepsi’s and Dr. Peppers and munching on hamburgers. Some sat in cars and leaned out of windows in conversation, listening to the latest Bobby Vinton song or the Beach Boys on the radio. I wanted one of those red and black school jackets. This was a new town, a bigger school, and new friends. I was fifteen and dreamt of going to college, of breaking out of my rural world, and into the real world of NASA missions, the nuclear age, and new cars.

It was 1962. The 60’s! But my 60’s were not the images I saw on the new color TV in the old Iowa farmhouse, where I was painfully trying to grow up. My world was the school bus before dawn ten miles from my home-room. My world was trying to learn chemistry and geometry, while having to learn English Composition. My world was one of solitude and three wishes; I wished that I were a star on the basketball team, that I were popular enough to go out on Saturday nights with the prettiest girl in school, and that I would get my name in the paper as one of those on the semester honor roll.

Those three wishes were never heard by any Genie in my world. And so for me, growing up in the early 60’s amounted to getting my homework done and trying not to get beat up. It helped a lot that I got a car my Senior year. That old ‘53 Chevy was freedom from school buses, and freedom to go see friends if the urge came up. It was independence and image; it added a new dimension to my life. Occasionally, during lunch break, I would drive a few friends around town. Me, showing off my ‘wheels’, and they, going for a ‘joy ride’. And if we saw another group doing the same, an exchange of horn honks was not only a greeting, it was like saying, “How about this? This is living!”

So when you look out your window on your street, try not to shake your head in disgust at those teenagers who might seem a bit noisy. Not all of them are popular or athletic, and few are geniuses. But they are all struggling to fit into a world so much bigger than they are. They are trying their wings. They are exploring freedoms withheld from them while they were children. They are beginning to experience what you and I take for granted; freedom is fun!

Caffeine Musings

Merlin Wright

CAREFUL WORDINGS. One of my brothers shared my sense of humor. He once bought big tomatoes at the farmer's market and served a bowl of them sliced at a family gathering. Someone asked him, "are these out of your garden?" He said yes and I later asked to see the plants. He explained to me that although he had not raised any, they were not IN his garden and so he could say they were OUT of his garden.

One of my friends long ago attended a political meeting and received a hair comb with [I LIKE IKE] printed on it. My friend is bald and so years later I asked him if he would give me the comb. He replied, "I like it so much I can't part with it."

I recently met a man and when I asked him what he does, he said he is a stalker. I then asked if he stalked people on the sidewalk or on the internet. He told me that he stocks bread on the grocery shelf.

My doctor asked me about my drinking habits and I said I like beer but don't know if two beers a day was too much or if four would be ok. He said that TWO beers sounds like a good idea to him. I later told my wife that my Doctor had said I should have two beers a day and that is the truth.

My gardening has provided me with quite a few cucumbers this year and it has been difficult to give away the excess. People at church have begun locking their car doors during summer months. My significant other asked me how many cucumber plants I have and I truthfully said only six hills. I did not say that each hill had four seeds planted in it.

Stopped for a meal at the drive-through during a rain shower and was told by my wife, "Roll your window up". We could also say to crank the window up or just to raise the window. When we learned to drive a car there were window cranks that had a knob that would roll as you turned the crank. Now the driver door even has a button to disable the window motors on the doors so kids can't fall out.

When told that it was time to go after the mail, I said, "after I finish typing this sentence." It used to be that we had a typewriter. Remember hitting the lever for the carriage return? That lever made the platen roll one line or it could be set to advance two lines. I still say to press return on the keyboard but the key I mean has ENTER printed on it. And even though I drink instant coffee at home, I still type the following, "Until next month, keep the coffee perking."



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Zebra Swallowtail, rare. On Butterfly Bush.

Pick the Right Medicare Drug Plan

Workshop Sept. 20 in Nebraska City

Mary Ann Holland
Nebraska SHIP Counselor, and
Nebraska Extension Educator Emeriti

The Nebraska Senior Health Insurance Information Program [SHIIP], a division of the Nebraska Department of Insurance, is pleased to host the “Pick the Right Medicare Drug Plan” workshop on September 20th in Nebraska City. Each year Medicare drug plans make changes to the cost and coverage you receive. This class will cover many topics including plan changes, available resources, and what to consider when comparing different options.

The “Pick the Right Medicare Drug Plan” workshop will be held on Thursday, September 20th from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Learning Center in Nebraska City, 819 Central Avenue.

Medicare Part D and Part C open enrollment for 2019 begins October 15 and lasts until Dec. 7th. Be an informed consumer as you make decisions for your drug coverage. Mary Ann Holland, SHIIP Certified Medicare Counselor, and retired Nebraska Extension Educator will be the presenter. This event is co-sponsored by Southeast Community College and the Nebraska Senior Health Insurance Information Program [SHIIP].

Tuition is being provided by the Nebraska SHIIP. There is no cost to attend the workshop, however participants must register to ensure adequate handout materials. To register, please visit the www.doi.ne.gov/shiip, or call 402-471-2841 at the SHIIP office.

Nebraska Senior Health Insurance Information Program [SHIIP] offers free, unbiased Medicare counseling and education to help seniors and people with disabilities make informed decisions about health insurance. Services are provided statewide by 350 certified volunteers. Nebraska SHIIP is federally-funded and is coordinated by the state Department of Insurance.



Variegated Fritillary; rare. This one torn by wind and storm.



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TREASURE HUNTS

Time is short for those who have to hunt for things that they don't need. Garages are filled with disposables that just don't fit, and their owners will want to make them disappear with prices so attractive that shoppers will be buyers. Farmers' Markets will be winding down, running short on the last of the best harvests of the season. Flea markets, on the other hand, never run short of anything to sell. Browsers always hope to see a better bargain down the street, while dealers fill bare spots on their tables faster than items can be sold and wrapped. It is a mad scramble more fun and unpredictable than gambling on lottery tickets.

SPIES IN THE TREES

It is a large tree, towering high over the yard, spreading its branches to extravagant reaches so that the shade is like a cool, green barn that draws the breeze up through its rafters. But it's what's crawling in those high limbs that might cause your breath to catch in your throat. If you're lucky, you may find the complete, shed skin of a huge snake, who wiggled out of his old coat and tossed it down to the grass. Picture him up there, looking down at you, slithering silently on a branch, looking for bird nests, hiding in plain sight, like a good spy.

Poetry

by Devon Adams

BUGSY

Last year she was a tiny kitten, learning how to hunt from her mother. This year the lessons are working, and she is a creeping, stalking, killing machine. As grasshoppers sail through the air, they are intercepted by a soft paw with sharp points that brings them straight to her white fangs and it's a done deal. Birds and bunnies are a bit more gruesome as they are consumed by the streamlined shiny body that has caught them. But the sound effects that are like small buzzing motors seem to be her favorite targets, as she crunches into the locust morsels that give themselves away with their raspy voices.

FUNNEL CAKES

They are decadent beyond any excuse to eat them. It is impossible to go to a fair anywhere without knowing they are there. And they seem to feel your presence until you are drawn closer and closer until their aroma meets your sniffer and the deal is done. Forget guilt and devour. Next year is a long time to wait for another taste.

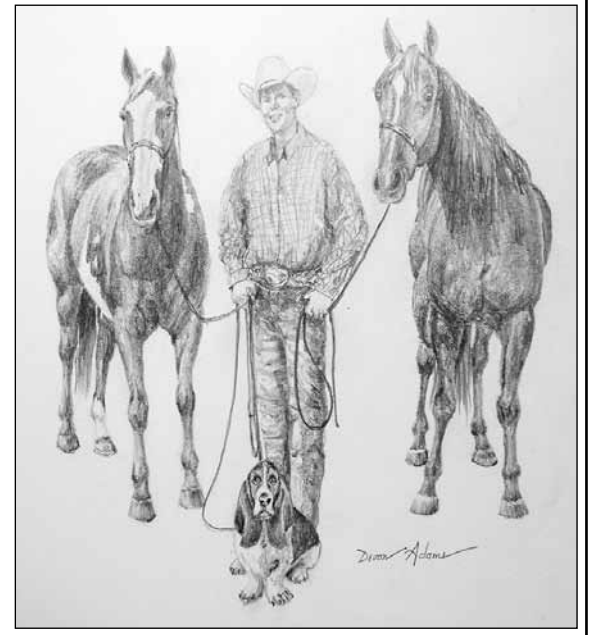
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AUTUMN SIGNALS

Late in summer, it is the little things that start to talk about the time and the clock. Leaves are dry and rustle as they feel the wind. Woolly caterpillars are coming into sight wearing winter coats. Linden and mulberry trees are dropping single bright yellow leaves, one at a time, now and then. One day there is a gathering of turkey vultures, spiraling over your head, planning a southern trip. Hackberry leaves look sick and are covered with crawly tiny bugs that fly in your face in clouds of disturbance if you jiggle a branch. Morning silence is deafening when barn swallows depart. Dark clouds of blackbirds are moving in long, undulating ropes of bodies from tree to tree, from town to country. Summer ends with whispers.

SUGAR WINE

They could be addicts, from the way they are drawn to the source of their passion. But you won't find them passed out in a gutter, or pulled over for a DUI. Or lost in the back of a bar, far beyond hope of feeling hope again. So small and delicate to survive through storms, heat and desert dryness, they are, on the contrary, dynamos of energy who never seem to rest or be lazy. Hummingbirds use so much gas that they have to eat ahead of it all. So, with magic blurry wings and mini motor sounds, they come again and again to dip their long, thin beaks that are like soda straws deep into the sugar feeders hanging from the trees. Sun glints off iridescent feathers that sparkle like crown jewels in a tiara. They are a living treasure no less valuable than jewelry fit for royalty.

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Hummingbird Moth on Butterfly Bush



Painted Lady on Butterfly Bush

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Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

Hubby and I were recently compelled to go shopping together. This is never a good idea, but when you both need to run an errand or buy something you can't get in town, it's silly to make separate trips.

I needed to return my salamander trapping gear to UNL (never mind why I had salamander trapping gear in the first place); we needed to pick up a load of mulch; I wanted to get some shrubs; Hubby needed some new shorts, which were on sale at Penney's; and we wanted to look for a floor lamp for the living room.

Here's how the day unfolded.

We got the mulch first, without incident. Checked that one off the list.

Next, we stopped at the garden center. They had the shrubs I wanted, but they were 54 bucks a piece. The salesperson generously advised us that they would be going on sale for 35% off in September. Good news, you say. Not so fast, I say. Now we had to make a decision: buy today or make another trip to Lincoln in three weeks? The math said to wait, but I wanted to get started planting before we put down all that new mulch. Plus, I wanted to plant a little earlier to give the shrubs more time to get established before winter.

A brief, but somewhat tense, negotiation ensued. The garden center employee tactfully left us to hash out our differences in private. Since we had room for only two shrubs in the pickup anyway, we decided to buy two at full price and get the rest later. (I planted those shrubs right away and we got the mulch spread, and the very next day we got two inches of rain. Perfect timing!! Score one for me.)

The next stop was Penney's. Hubby asked me to help him find the right size shorts. I asked what style to look for, which turned out to be a trickier question than you might think.

I opined that I prefer the look of flat-front pants versus pleated front.

Hubby said he liked the look of pleats. “Like this pair,” he said, pointing to a pair of flat-front shorts.

“Those are flat-front,” I said.

“No, they have a pleat,” he insisted, pointing to the crease down the front.

“That’s a crease,” I said, “not a pleat.”

Once we got that straightened out (another score for me), I suggested he might consider a pair of cargo-style shorts.

“Don’t like the look of ‘em,” he said. Clearly, he was harboring a touch of resentment over the pleat-crease discussion.

I showed him a pair of cargo shorts made of soft, stretchy fabric. Long story short: he tried them on and decided they looked pretty good. (Another score for me. Not that I was keeping track.)

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PSC Welcomes the Class of 2022



Peru State freshmen packed 31,104 meals for Omaha Against Hunger

The day after moving onto campus, the class of 2022, Peru State College's newest students, gathered for a service project to benefit Omaha Against Hunger. The students were able to pack 31,104 meals on Saturday.

Emily Oestmann (Johnson, NE) said, "It was a great and easy way to get involved. The people in charge were motivating and excited to have us. I could tell they really wanted to make a difference and they inspired all of us as well." Oestmann continued, "It made for a very fun and wholesome atmosphere."

Dr. Matthew Thielen, dean of student life, adds, "The students who participated in this event did a great job working as a community and understanding the importance of what it means to give back to others."



Students working in the Al Wheeler Activity Center.

Omaha Against Hunger is a volunteer-driven effort to package and distribute a highly nutritious dry food formula around the world through feeding programs, orphanages, schools and clinics. Locally, the meals are distributed through food pantries and food banks.

OmahaAgainstHunger.org writes, "The meal ingredients are formulated by food scientists to provide a rich source of easily digestible protein, carbohydrates, and vitamins needed by an undernourished child's body and mind. The food is also acceptable to the broad diversity of ethnic tastes and religious differences around the world."



Students working to fill meal packaging.

Daniel Jensen with Omaha Against Hunger thanked everyone involved including the loading and unloading crew; Dylan Andersen (Thedford, NE), Austin Connot (Allen, NE), Noah Kasbohm (Nebraska City, NE), Jaylon Sapfo (Kansas City, MO), Riley Holstine (Mound City, MO) and Dan Boshart (Wood River, NE).



President and Elaine Hanson welcome the new Freshman Class.



The Freshman Class fills a cheering section of the Bobcat Stadium.



The Freshman Class forms the letters "PSC" at the end of the program.



Nine New Faculty at PSC for Fall



Nine new faculty members have joined the Peru State College campus for the fall semester. Faculty are hired through a rigorous recruitment and application process culminating in on-campus interviews with other faculty, staff and students.

Dr. Susan Dunekacke joins Peru State as an Assistant Professor of English. She has been an adjunct faculty member with Peru State College and taught English and Speech at Table Rock High School. Dunekacke received a Doctorate of Arts in Imaginative Literature from Harrison Middleton University (Arizona). Her interests include creative writing and Nebraska history as well as theater, film and the history of art and architecture.

Dr. Helane Folske-Starlin joins Peru State as an Assistant Professor of Special Education. She was an Inclusion Teacher for grades 6-8 for Port Huron Area Schools and taught at the collegiate level for Saginaw Valley State University and St. Claire Community College. Folske-Starlin is active in local and regional advocacy groups and has received awards for her work in advocacy. She received her PhD in Special Education Learning and Behavior Disorders from Wayne State University (Michigan).

Dr. Charles Hicks joins Peru State as an Assistant Professor of English. He was most recently a lecturer at Texas Christian University and was previously a lecturer and undergraduate advisor with the University of Texas at Arlington. Dr. Hicks received a PhD in English from the University of Texas at Arlington. His research interests include American literature and horror fiction.

Maxwell Kathol joins Peru State as an Instructor of Business. He was most recently President and CEO of the Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce where he partnered with 875 active members to build relationships, accomplish various community projects and provide a voice for the Kearney business community. Mr. Kathol has also served as the Director of Economic Development for the City of Crete and the Executive Director of the Plattsmouth Chamber of Commerce. He received his Master of Science in Organizational Management from Peru State College.

Susan Moore joins Peru State as an Assistant Professor of Art. She was most recently a Lead Studio Instructor at the University of North Texas. She has held many exhibitions across the U.S. and participated in an international exchange program with China. She received her Master of Fine Arts from the University of North Texas. Moore's areas of interest include painting, drawing, mixed media and photography.

Miranda Pollock joins Peru State as an Assistant Professor of Art. She has worked as a freelance designer, creating unique images, illustrations, websites and logos for customers. In addition, she was an Assistant Professor for Buena Vista University and an Assistant Professor at the University of Minnesota. She received her Master of Fine Arts from the University of Minnesota and is currently pursuing a PhD in General Psychology with an emphasis on designing for user experience at Northcentral University (Arizona).

Dr. Linda Sterling joins Peru State as an Assistant Professor of Psychology. She was most recently in private practice as a Sport Psychology Consultant. Prior to this, she was Director of the Sport and Exercise Psychology Master's Program at Northwest Missouri State University's School of Health Science and Wellness, Division of Behavioral Services, as well as having taught undergraduate and graduate courses there in Psychology. Sterling is a current Certified Mental Performance Consultant and a Certified Health Coach. She received her PhD from the University of Kansas in Education: Sports Studies with a Sport Psychology specialization.

Sara Westerlin joins Peru State as an Instructor of Education. She was most recently a first grade teacher with Prairie Wind Elementary in Omaha. She has also served as an adjunct faculty member with the School of Education at Metropolitan Community College. Westerlin earned a Master of Science in Elementary Education (with an Early Childhood Education Concentration) from the University of Nebraska – Omaha. She anticipates completing a Doctorate in Education with a focus on Educational Leadership from the College of St. Mary in 2019.

Dr. B. Jude Wright joins Peru State as an Assistant Professor of English. He has also taught at Quinnipiac University, Goodwin College (Connecticut), the University of Hartford and the University of New Haven. Dr. Wright received his PhD in English from the University of South Florida. His interests include Victorian literature and metacognitive pedagogy.

City of Peru and Peru State College collaborate on Vision for the Future

A group of City of Peru officials, Peru State College officials, city residents and friends of the College have begun meeting to develop a vision and possible plan for collaboration between the City and College.

Darrin Reeves, mayor of the City of Peru, said, “From infrastructure to housing to economic development, the City and College have shared needs. Creating a shared vision is the first step to meeting those needs.”

A purpose statement for the collaboration reads, “The purpose of this group is to create a plan to enhance the City of Peru and Peru State College by leading efforts to gather input from members of the community. Based on community input, the plan will set priorities and identify ways to share resources.”

Dr. Dan Hanson, president of Peru State College, writes, “The success of the City and the College is interdependent. We look forward to stronger partnerships with the City, city residents, its businesses and our alumni.”

Initial meetings focused on how the City and College working together has proven to be more effective than working alone. The recent Park Avenue project was cited as example of how this was true. The group has asked city residents and stakeholders to be watching for surveys seeking community input. The surveys are expect this fall.



Logo for the new group, originally proposed by Ashley Hansen, a resident of Peru.

IMPERUVING AS ONE

Group members include:

- 1 Darrin Reeves – Mayor, city resident, College employee
 - 2 Jason Jones – City Council member, city Resident
 - 3 Bill Hunter – City Council member, city resident
 - 4 Justin Douglas, President of Main Street Bank
 - 5 Vanessa Sherman – President of the Peru Community Impact Group, city Resident
 - 6 Becca Jewell – Peru State College Foundation employee
 - 7 Bob Engles – Area Realtor, Trustee of the Nebraska State College System
 - 8 Cindy and Tim Hoffman – Peru State College alumni, Peru State College Foundation Board Members, landlords in the city
 - 9 Dr. Dan Hanson, President of Peru State College, city resident
 - 10 Christopher Nwafor, Student at Peru State College and member of Student Senate, city resident
-

Peru State College named most affordable Online College in Nebraska

Peru State College was named the most affordable online college in Nebraska by the Center for Online Education. The list was generated by directly comparing the cost of a full semester at schools with at least one bachelor’s degree available completely online.

OnlineColleges.net writes about the methodology, “Our list of the most affordable online colleges in Nebraska is based on in-state yearly tuition, or annual tuition rates if a school does not differentiate between in-state and out-of-state students.”

“The online schools in Nebraska with the lowest tuition are ranked highest, providing prospective students with a true list of the most affordable online colleges in their state.”

Registrations now being accepted for Peru State Homecoming Parade

Members of the Peru State College Student Senate have announced details of the College’s 98th Annual Homecoming Parade, which will begin at 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 6 on the College campus. This year’s theme is “Road Trip”.

Parade entry registration is available online at <https://www.peru.edu/homecoming/>. Entries must be submitted by Thursday, October 4. Cash prizes or trophies will be awarded based on those entries which best represent the homecoming theme, though all types of entries are welcome. Awards will be given to an on-campus category and an off-campus category.

Participants will be contacted directly with additional information regarding the route and line-up.

For more information on the parade or any of Peru State’s Homecoming events, contact Student Senate President Noah Harvey at 402-872-2329 or studentsenate@campus.peru.edu.

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