

# The Scratching Post

March 2025

## Introducing Banner County's Next Superintendent

Hello everyone! I am so excited to be given the opportunity to lead Banner County Schools as Superintendent starting in July 2025!! I come to Banner County from Twin River Public Schools where I have served as the Interim Superintendent this year. I have previously been the Superintendent at Franklin, 7-12 Principal at Bridgeport and PK-12 Principal at Lyons-Decatur. My teaching career was spent in Gothenburg where I taught high school chemistry, physical science, environmental science and physics. I was a former head girls basketball coach, jr. high football coach and also officiated high school football games.

I grew up in Crawford, Nebraska and enrolled in Chadron State College, not sure of what I wanted to do for a career, I took classes working towards education and funeral service. I decided on funeral service and upon completion of requirements to enter Mortuary School and getting married to my wife, Christy, we moved so I could attend Mid-America College of Funeral Service in Jeffersonville, IN, where I obtained my Associates Degree in Mortuary Science. I enjoyed a very rewarding 15 years in funeral service before deciding to move back to Chadron and finish the few education classes that I had remaining so I could teach the subject that I love, science. I received my Bachelors Degree from Chadron State, my Masters Degree from Concordia University, and my Educational Specialist Degree from Wayne State College.

Christy is an elementary teacher who is currently teaching middle school science. We have two daughters; Ashley who is in her first year of law school at UNL College of Law and Keely who is living in Kearney with her husband and three small children. I have a son, Alex, who lives on his wife's family's ranch just outside Douglas, Wyoming.

I enjoy time with family, watching sports, camping, learning new things and seeing new places. I look forward to working with all of the students, staff, and community members of the district to help make Banner County Schools the best school district it possibly can be.

It's a **GREAT** day to be a [Wildcat!!](#)

Mr. Chris Lecher



**BANNER COUNTY SCHOOL**

**PREPARING THE STUDENTS OF TODAY FOR THE WORLD OF TOMORROW!**

# Speaking Our Way to State

Speech season has come and gone, and this year, a group of nine eager members dedicated their time to accomplishing their goals. This group has overcome many challenges, from going against Class A and B schools to conquering their nerves, but they persisted despite their worries. According to Mr. C., the students can continue to improve, but mostly, he wants them to focus on two areas of improvement. "First, they need to realize they are as good as I say they are, and second, they need to calm down." Despite their nerves and doubts, the team proved how amazing they were by receiving 3rd place at MAC on March 1st. With this placement, they earned a trip to the State Speech Competition!

The team has grown in dealing with their nerves altogether, but there has also been much individual improvement. Riley Allen stated, "My favorite part of speech is meeting new people." Riley uses speech as a way to overcome her anxiety and converse with people without being anxious. These students commonly overcome their nerves by doing breathing exercises and thinking of it as a casual conversation instead of a performance. By practicing these skills, each member has improved in memorizing their speeches and performing with more actions and purpose. Speech has many benefits, but the most beneficial part is the communication skills these students gain and can use throughout their lives. Participants gain more confidence from public speaking, which will help with any career they choose.

Congratulations to the Speech state qualifiers. We can't wait to see how our Wildcat Yappers do at the state level. Good luck, and way to represent our school in such a phenomenal way. Keep an eye on the school's Facebook page for updates on state speech! By Kesmera Palu



## Geography Bee Results

We want to shout out the winners of this year's Geography Bee. Congratulations to **Luke Olsen** for being the Champion in the Junior High Division and **Gabe Olsen** for being the Champion of the Elementary Division.

	Elementary Division	Junior High Division
Champion	Gabe Olsen	Luke Olsen
Runner-Up	Aili Cooper	Braedyn Bojorquez
Third Place	Gannon Scheer	Bailie Gilbert



## *Banner County FFA Program Raises \$30,000 at Annual Auction!*

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, the FFA chapter hosted its annual silent and live auction. These auctions took about two weeks to prepare. However, FFA encouraged members to reach out to last year's donors and new donors. They received about 180 donations, more than the previous year's contributions. Radio advertisements spread word about this fundraising event throughout the panhandle.

The auction was a lively event. Tables were set up for the silent auction items while the live auction items were placed near the stage for all guests to see. While guests ate their meal, they could participate in games while the silent auction was still running. These games included bingo, heads/tails with cups, and card games. These games were an additional way to raise funds since there were entry fees, with the exception of bingo. Finally, after dinner and the closing of the silent auctions, it was time for the live auctions. Guests tried their best to out-bid each other in hopes of winning a stellar donation, such as a huge homemade pie, power tools, fencing, custom signs, beef sales, and even a standing freezer fridge. The live auction went off without a hitch, thanks to Del Ray Kraupie and all of the volunteers.

After all was said and done, through rounds of counting and recounting, the FFA members finally came to a final tabulation from this year's auction. By combining the free-will donation box and silent and live auction items, the FFA program raised \$30,000 this year! These funds will go towards upcoming projects, entry fees to competitions, and help cover the cost of attending the State FFA Convention. Thank you to all the donors and everyone who supported the Banner County FFA Chapter!

By Jayden Marx and Miss Bohac



## **Olsen Ties for 3<sup>rd</sup> at Midwest Regional Spelling Bee Competition!**

Congratulations to Luke Olsen on another successful trip to Omaha for the Regional Spelling Bee. Sixty-five Nebraska and western Iowa competitors began this competition, but contestants were eliminated with one mistake. After the first two preliminary writing rounds, fifty-one competitors were eliminated. Contestants then moved on to the oral round. Similar to Banner County's competition, one misspoken letter led to an immediate dismissal from the contest. Nine of the fourteen contestants were eliminated at the end of the second oral round. With five competitors remaining, two more rounds passed until the third round, resulting in three contestants, including Luke, to misspell "psalmody." Talk about a tricky word! Even with the misspelling of this challenging word, Luke tied for third place. Way to go, Luke; we are so proud of you!





## *Jr. High Basketball Recap*

The boys' and girls' junior basketball seasons have ended. They finished off their season with a lot of success and memories. The students put so much effort into the game this year. The girls' team almost went undefeated! They capped their season with a second-place finish at MAC. As for the boys, they had many rough games, going into overtime on many occasions. However, they continued working as hard as possible to finish their season, which resulted in a third-place finish at MAC.

### **Girls' Basketball**

This year's team consisted of only five girls! Returning eighth graders Kassie Loutzheniser and Maddie May and three seventh graders, Kambrie Loutzheniser, Callie Woodral, and Bella Young, filled this year's roster. Despite many challenges, they had a successful season. These girls had to remain in shape, avoid fouling out, and show good sportsmanship to be successful. We wish Kassie and Maddie the best of luck as they move on to high school basketball next year, and we can't wait to see how the team will overcome next year's challenges.



### **Boys' Basketball**

This year's team consisted of thirteen boys, with eighth-graders Braedyn Bojorquez, Tack Cross, Davian Martinez, Luke Olsen, and Tate Olsen leading the team. With a team composed of sixth through eighth-grade boys, the team had various skills to draw upon. Coach Lemoine said, "I was able to see much improvement in [the boys] being able to work as a team. Working as a team is the most important thing you can do." Thanks to this teamwork, the boys were able to grow as a team and rely upon each other on and off the court. As Luke, Tate, Braedyn, Davian, and Tack move up to high school basketball next year, we hope the skills they learned this year transfer into new scenarios.

Now that the season has ended, we want to thank everyone who came to support the teams. Your support means the world to our young athletes. So, mark your calendars and set reminders for next year's season. We love seeing the Wildcat Nation out in full force at home events! By Kyrie Roldan

**ONE TEAM  
ONE DREAM**



## Senior Spotlight — Destiney Kraft

This month's senior spotlight features Destiney Kraft. Destiney is described as determined, committed, and caring. We asked Destiney about her high school years and what her plans are for after graduation.

**Q: What extracurricular activities have you participated in?**

**A:** Volleyball, Student Council, and Speech

**Q: What are your goals for this year?**

**A:** To make sure my grades are up and be able to pass this year.

**Q: What are your plans for after high school?**

**A:** I want to attend nursing college.

**Q: What is one of your favorite classes and why?**

**A:** Teaching as profession because I like working with the little kids.

**Q: What is one piece of advice you would give to younger students?**

**A:** Don't lose your focus because of other people. Think of you, and focus on school and how to improve yourself.



## Senior Spotlight — Makayla Enriquez

This month's senior spotlight features Makayla Enriquez is described as fiery, independent, and intelligent. We asked Makayla about her high school years and what her plans are for after graduation.

**Q: What extracurricular activities have you participated in?**

**A:** Basketball, Volleyball, Track, and Speech

**Q: What are your goals for this year?**

**A:** I want to keep my grades up.

**Q: What are your plans for after high school?**

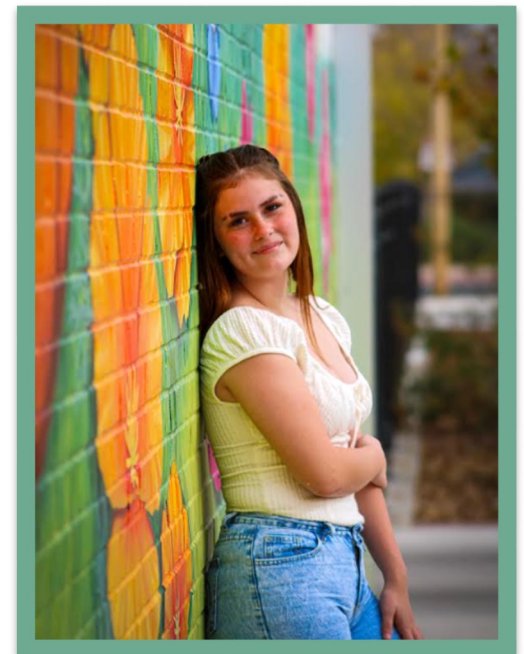
**A:** I plan to attend WEC for Cosmetology.

**Q: What is one of your favorite classes and why?**

**A:** Government, I enjoy learning about the events that led to our unique form of government.

**Q: What is one piece of advice you would give to younger students?**

**A:** Focus on your grades instead of trying to fit in. Today's gossip isn't going to matter in twenty years.





## National Honor Society Inducts New Members

We want to congratulate Knox Hottell, Kambrie Loutzenhiser, Tate Olsen, and George Teeple on being inducted into the Junior High National Honors Society (NHS). NHS is built on four pillars: character, scholarship, service, and leadership. The students who were inducted had to show that they would exhibit these qualities. For the scholarship component, the students must maintain at least a 3.625 GPA.



## FFA Flower & Vegetable Sales

Saturday, May 10th– The FFA will be hosting flower and vegetable sales from 9 am-1 pm. There will be fresh coffee and donuts in the morning and lunch at noon. They will be selling flowers, vegetables, and hanging baskets. Thank you all for supporting the Banner County FFA!



## Save the Date For Upcoming Banner County Events!

### Thrifty to Nifty Event

Bring an item worth \$10 or less to the Shelter. Swap it out for a random item and give it an upgrade in this new competition. Check in your "new" entry from 8:30-9:30 am on June 14th for a chance to win at Historical Days.

### Swap Meeting

May 22nd at 7:30 pm  
Banner County Museum  
Cash Prize for 1st and 2nd Place

### Homemade Apron Contest

*Time to show your style!*

Make an apron and check in between 8:30 – 9:30 am on June 14th at the shelter.

Cash Prize for 1st and 2nd Place

Contact Linda Barrett at (308) 241-2163 with questions and details about the Thrifty to Nifty and Homemade Apron competition events.

### Banner County Historical Days

June 14, 2025

Schedule TBA

Harrisburg, NE

Email [bchistsoc@yahoo.com](mailto:bchistsoc@yahoo.com) for details.



# Board Briefs

March 10, 2025

## Awards and Recognition

President Douglas Olsen commended the following students, staff, and patrons:

-Students of the Month - Emersynn Stauffer, K; Dylan Perez, 5; Eli Allen, 6; Tatum Revelle, K; Breklyn Cross, 1; Knox Hottell, 7.

-Wilbur Reichenberg – who competed at the Nebraska State wrestling championships in Omaha on February 20<sup>th</sup>

-MAC Speech at Big Springs, March 1<sup>st</sup>: The team earned a 3rd place.

Abigayle Jones - 4th place Serious, 3<sup>rd</sup> place Poetry; Keira Bolander - 7th place Serious, Kesmera Palu -4th place Persuasive, 5<sup>th</sup> place Poetry, 3<sup>rd</sup> place OID; Riley Allen - 6th place Persuasive; Isaac Olsen - 2nd place Informative; Sofiah Villagrana - 6th place Humorous, Lydia Wenger and Keira Bolander - 3rd place Duet; Karleigh Leslie and Makynna Boettcher - 4th place Duet.

-FFA district contest at Kimball on March 5th:

Environmental & Natural Resources Team placed 6th, qualifying for State FFA: Tobey May (10th individually), Isaac Olsen (16th individually), Brentsen McGowan, & Leigh McGowan; Meats Judging Team placed 10th: Wilbur Reichenberg, Makynna Boettcher, Jackson Onstott, & Aron Knaub; Landscape team placed 13th: Abigayle Jones, Kambree Hottell, & Karlye Dittbenner.

-Congratulations to FFA members for a successful Auction on March 7th. Thanks to the community for their support !

-Thanks to staff members Troy Holmberg, Sonja Lind, Wittni Boettcher, Kinsey Groves, Jessica Stauffer, & Mark Steer who participated in the Superintendent interview panels.

## Accept Certified Staff Resignations

Accept the resignations of Christopher Cooper and Cameron Geary with appreciation. Passed with a motion by Jake Knaub and a second by Laura Baker.

## Approve Classified Salary Schedules

Approve a 3% increase in the base pay on classified employee salary schedules for Class A, Class B, Class C, and Class D. Passed with a motion by Jake Knaub and a second by Laura Baker.

## Approve Principal's 2025-2026 Salary

Approve Troy Holmberg's salary of \$95,275 for Banner County School PK-12 Principal for the 2025-2026. Passed with a motion by Jake Knaub and a second by Laura Baker.

## Approve Superintendent's Contract

Approve superintendent contract, as presented, for Chris Lecher, for a period of two years beginning on July 1, 2025 and expiring on June 30, 2027, with the salary for the first contract year at \$120,000 to be paid in 12 equal monthly installments beginning in the month of August 2025.

## Comments from the Audience

Keah Cross and Ralph Reece commented on the OEF program.

Kinsey Groves shared community volunteer names to be recognized for the Little Girls basketball program: Cherry Felkins, Melissa Jones, Priscilla Stauffer, Kaitlin Knaub, Alyssa Faden, Caily Reece, Olivia Terrones, Abbie Cross.

**For complete minutes of the March 10, 2025 BOE meeting, visit: [www.bcswildcats.org](http://www.bcswildcats.org)**

## Last Call—Items for Sale

Get organized! Filing cabinets: 4-drawer \$15/2-drawer—\$10

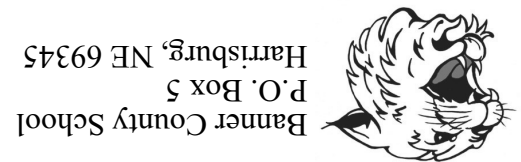
T-8 light fixtures (5) - \$5 each

Projectors - can be hooked up to computer, video, etc.—\$10



**Call Kindra Olsen  
in the school office:  
308-436-5262**

HARRISBURG, NE 69345  
CURRENT RESIDENT or PO BOX



## 2025 School District Census Report

The School District Census Report provides the Department of Education with a count of children ages 5 – 18 that reside in a school district as of June 30. This information is used in the calculation of several types of state and county funding sources distributed to public school districts. If your child DOES NOT attend Banner County School, and you live in Banner County, please complete the following information and return to: **Kindra Olsen, BCS School Secretary, PO Box 5, Harrisburg, NE 69345**

Head of Household \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_ Gender M F

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_ Gender M F

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_ Gender M F

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_ Gender M F

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_ Gender M F