School challenges front and center during 2010

This week the Wauneta Breeze continues its Year-in-Review look back at the year that was 2010, with headlines and newsmakers the focus of this week's retrospective.

By Tina Kitt

The Wauneta Breeze

School news grabbed much of the headline space in 2010, with ongoing improvement projects at the fore. In June the Wauneta-Palisade School Board voted to approve $1.1 million in facility upgrades to the Wauneta Attendance Center and $54,000 for upgrades at the Palisade Attendance Center.

In September 2010, well into the construction process, the communities of Wauneta and Palisade were shocked by the death of WP Superintendent Nelson Dahl, the visionary force in seeing the long-discussed school renovations become a reality. Prior to his death, Dahl played a key role in procuring over $200,000 in federal stimulus funds for the local school district.

Dr. Stan Sibley took over as WP superintendent in November, filling the void left in the wake of

Dahl's death.

Longtime school board member Brenda Anderson opted not to seek re-election, with Laurie Maris elected to the board in November.

Frenchman Valley Co-op was also a top newsmaker throughout 2010. In March Monty Mays of Imperial took over as Wauneta's FVC branch manager, replacing Lloyd Stott.

Mays was instrumental in getting FVC property and facilities in Wauneta repaired and cleaned up, earning praise from local officials.

FVC made further investments in their Wauneta facilities in 2010, completing a painting and repair project on their large concrete grain storage silos as well as initiating the construction of a 130-foot tall grain bin on property across the street from the FVC office. This will expand available grain storage capacity in Wauneta by more than half a million bushels.

Also in 2010, the FVC company lost 240,000 bushels of storage capacity in southwest Nebraska when fire destroyed a building and contents at FVC's Perry location.

Village of Wauneta headlines

Increases in wholesale electrical costs were passed along to Wauneta Municipal Utilities customers in 2010, with the Wauneta Village Board approving a 10 percent rate hike and restructuring of electric department billing practices.

Residents of Wauneta who qualified were offered a chance to make upgrades on their homes

utilizing forgivable loans after the Village Board voted to partner with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and the Southwest Nebraska Community Betterment Corporation via the state's Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation program.

The Village continued to pursue ways to find a cost-effective manner to lower arsenic levels in the municipal water supply to comply to the revised federal standard.

After eight years with the Village of Wauneta, Patsy Williams stepped down in June. Sara Bardsley was hired to replace her in the office.

Board members Tony Cribelli, Ted Grimm and and Beau Kramer were re-elected to four-year terms in November.

Other notables in 2010

• The Wauneta Women of Today were hailed as "Heroes of the Silver Screen" for their successful fundraising campaign encouraging local businesses and families to become "Movie Sponsors of the Week."

• Heritage of Wauneta also helped augment the coffers of the Chateau Theatre, launching their "Roaming Gnome" fundraiser. Matching funds from Vetters Health Services also benefitted the theatre.

• In April the Wauneta Breeze captured the Loral Johnson Community Newspaper Sweepstakes Award as the top point-earner among Nebraska's weekly newspapers in the Nebraska Press Association's Better Newspaper Contest.

• Missouri journalist Josh Sumner joined the Breeze staff, replacing David Vrbas who relocated with his family in Lincoln. Sumner took over as managing editor in August, replacing longtime editor Tina Kitt, who remains with the paper as associate editor.

• Pastor Bonnie McCord began serving the United Methodist Churches in Wauneta and Palisade in July following Rev. Judy Dye who is now serving a parish of three churches in Lincoln as a part-time member of a pastoral team.

• In October, Ivy Ellicott became the first woman to be elected to the Wauneta-Palisade Co-op Oil board of directors in the company's 80 year history.

• The 100th anniversary of the Wauneta Volunteer Fire Department was commemorated in a historical retrospective in the Breeze initiated in October.

Next week's 2010 Year in Review will continue with an overview of sports, agriculture, NRD issues, 2010 elections, crimes and tragedies.