

Community gathers to celebrate nursing home success

Written by Wauneta Breeze

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Courtesy Photo | Ray Kisinger

Approximately 100 attended the Sunrise Heights of Wauneta Grand Re-Opening Celebration last Saturday. The event was intended to celebrate all that the community had accomplished leading up to the purchase of the nursing home.

By Sheri Hink

The Wauneta Breeze

The community of Wauneta has a lot to celebrate. One of the most recent causes for celebration is the recent transition of ownership of the nursing home.

In July 2011 Vetter Health Services, which had operated the nursing home for 29 years, announced they would close the facility as of July 1, 2012.

But, the community wasn't about to let that happen. Instead, the community launched a massive campaign to save the local nursing home.

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The facility employs nearly 60 workers and has been a place for rest, rehabilitation and/or final home for countless Waunetans.

The village of Wauneta successfully purchased the nursing home after detailed feasibility studies and in-depth discussions on how to pay for the purchase and ensure successful operation of the home.

The purchase and initial operation of the facility was funded through village funding (\$150,000), private funds (\$242,525) and revenue bonds (\$500,000).

Last Saturday, Sept. 29, the community came together to celebrate the successful campaign to save the nursing home.

On display at the celebration was a sign that named the 234 private individuals and businesses who backed the project with their checkbook.

The Grand Re-Opening Celebration, as it was dubbed, was attended by approximately 100 community members, residents and staff members.

Afternoon of celebration

Three Wauneta-Palisade students, Cameo Rector, Christi Christner and Tayler Nordhausen, kicked the event off by performing a song each. Sara Behrends provided accompaniment for Rector and Nordhausen.

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Administrator Lisa Kisinger and village board member Page Johnston welcomed the crowd to the celebration event.

Next, Lucille McBride and Deb Andrew each took a turn talking about why the village purchase of the Wauneta nursing home was so very important, both to the community and to each of them individually.

Carol Thompson with the American Legion Auxiliary presented Sunrise Heights of Wauneta with a new United States flag at the event.

The Wauneta Chamber welcomed the new business into the community by presenting them with their first dollar of clear profit.

The opening of the facility was made official with a ribbon cutting. Village board chairman Lloyd Sinner and Kisinger shared the honor of cutting the ribbon which signified the official opening of the nursing home under village ownership.

After the formal presentations and activities, celebration attendees were able to take guided tours of the nursing home.

Live auction a success

After the tours there was a live fundraising auction. Auction items were

donated by area individuals and businesses. The top seller at the auction was a quilt made by Beryl Knotwell which sold for well over \$200.

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The event raised \$2,245 from the auction and donations. The funds raised will be used to purchase a new commercial-grade soft serve ice cream machine for the residents. The ice cream machine comes with a \$3,200 price tag. Staff was excited that so much was raised toward the purchase. After the auction the group enjoyed a meal of pulled beef and pulled pork. The meat was prepared by Scott Walgren, Bob Walgren and Kip and Terry Engell. Tami Vrbas made barbeque beans to accompany the sandwiches.

The ladies at the local churches made sure there would be a sweet ending to the celebration through their contributions of desserts, pies and cakes.