

Small town spirit

Written by Wauneta Breeze

Thursday, 03 May 2012 15:51 - Last Updated Thursday, 03 May 2012 15:51

By Sheri Hink

The Wauneta Breeze

Last Thursday I had the opportunity to attend the FFA banquet. While I was there I found myself drawn in by the keynote speaker, Vance Heyer, a young man now living in Lincoln who grew up in a small town.

Heyer spoke poignantly about the benefits of living and working in a small town. Sure, there are draw backs, ones that all of us who grew up in a small town—and sometimes the media—are quick to point out. But, in the last few years there's been a movement that recognizes the power and strength of small towns.

This is what Heyer focused on in his speech to the FFA members at last Thursday's banquet. He spoke eloquently of the benefits of learning a work ethic at a young age through the chores that rural life often requires of young people. He spoke of the togetherness that small town residents feel, something that, in my opinion, is felt less keenly by those from "big" places.

Ten years ago I decided I was done with rural Nebraska, I was moving to Illinois and never coming back. However, it didn't take long until I found my heart longing to come back to the rural way of life, the life I grew up waiting to escape.

I'll never forget my mother's surprised exclamation when I called her to say I was going to write my thesis, the culmination of my sociological education, on a farming topic. But, that's another story.

Small town spirit

Written by Wauneta Breeze

Thursday, 03 May 2012 15:51 - Last Updated Thursday, 03 May 2012 15:51

My point today is that the tragic event of last week, and the reaction of the community to the tragedy, has touched me.

I find myself mourning the loss of Cody even though I never had the pleasure of meeting him. I feel like I've gotten to know just a little of Cody through my conversations with people who did.

I heard about a man who gave 110 percent in work and play and who saw value and worth in every person he met regardless of their origin, race or ethnicity. I learned of a man that had charisma, drive and tenacity to accomplish just about anything. Now that's what I call the epitome of a small town boy.

Those kinds of individual and community spirit are things I see as unique to small towns. And, wow, is that spirit powerful.