

The ordinance doesn't single out any breed, but it gives the Nebraska Humane Society the power to find a dog potentially dangerous. **Page 4B**

Werner Park would honor Bob Gibson

By JOHN FERAK
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

TD Ameritrade Park is home to the "Road to Omaha" statue. Now Sarpy County wants Werner Park to have its own bronze statue for fans to climb on and snap keepsake photographs. The county hopes to place an 8-foot statue near the stadium entrance to honor a baseball legend who has lived in Sarpy County for 40 years: Bob Gibson.

Sarpy County hopes to put an 8-foot statue near the stadium entrance of the Omaha native and former St. Louis pitcher.

Sarpy County Attorney Lee Polikov is overseeing plans to erect a larger-than-life statue of Gibson, a Hall of Fame pitcher, at the Omaha Storm Chasers' home stadium. The statue, along with landscaping and lighting, would be the first phase in Werner Park's Legacy Project. This phase is

estimated to cost \$250,000 and would include a Walk of Fame to honor Nebraskans in the Hall of Fame. Later phases would feature a public art display and a state-designated arboretum. The Sarpy County Board recently allocated \$30,000 in tourism funds to launch the public

art display. That money would pay for Omaha artist Littleton Alston to cast four bronze scale models of the statue. "This statue would be the equivalent to the 'Road to Omaha' statue," said Wayne Bena, Sarpy election commissioner and Storm Chasers season-ticket holder.

Polikov said the tribute would honor Gibson, an Omaha native who pitched for the St. Louis Cardinals, and his journey to overcome illness, poverty and racial prejudice. It would include bronze plaques with historical information about Gibson, including his athletic career at Creighton University. Alston is an associate professor at Creighton and a longtime

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THE HALL Ever been to The Hall? It's one of Omaha's newest hotspots, where World-Herald reporters blog about all things city politics. thehall.omaha.com

City sends second lobbyist to Lincoln

■ O'Hara Lindsay & Associates is hired for up to \$31,000 for the first half of 2012.

By JUAN PEREZ JR.
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

The City of Omaha will have a second lobbyist working the Legislature's halls during the body's upcoming short session.

A narrow majority of the City Council approved Omaha Mayor Jim Suttle's request to hire O'Hara Lindsay & Associates for up to \$31,000 through the first half of next year.

Suttle's administration says the lobbying arrangement is meant to give strong representation to the state's urban areas and was organized in concert with the City of Lincoln and other municipalities.

Yet the council's 4-3 vote on the matter showed some members' skepticism of the proposal.

"I just think that it's not a very good use of taxpayer money to bring in more lobbyists," said council member Jean Stothert. "I think if we're going to improve a relationship with the Legislature, it should come from the administration."

Council member Franklin Thompson and Council President Thomas Mulligan joined Stothert in voting against the proposal.

Omaha already has a full-time lobbyist. Jack Cheloha is paid \$95,000 annually to represent the city's issues before the Legislature.

Other council members said the additional lobbying work is needed to further the city's interests before the Legislature.

"As I look at this, Jack Cheloha, our lobbyist, needs all the help he can get to help stop the tide of anti-Omaha sentiment (in the Legislature)," said Councilman Chris Jerram. "To me, \$31,000 is very modest."

Jerram and council members Garry Gernandt, Pete Festersen

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ON PAGE 2B

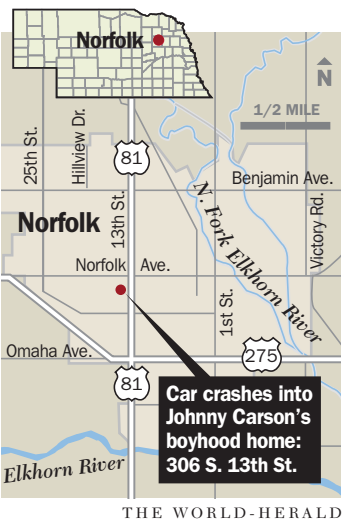
The City Council clears a path for ads in sports complexes.

No shows tonight at this house



JAKE WRAGGE/WORLD-HERALD NEWS SERVICE

Norfolk, Neb., police officers and firefighters investigate a crash at the boyhood home of Johnny Carson, which was hit Tuesday by a sport utility vehicle. The driver of the SUV — Robert L. Peterson, 76, of Yankton, S.D. — was taken to Faith Regional Health Services in Norfolk.



THE WORLD-HERALD

SUV crashes into Johnny Carson home

By SHERYL SCHMECKPEPER
WORLD-HERALD NEWS SERVICE

NORFOLK, Neb. — A sport utility vehicle plowed into Johnny Carson's boyhood home here, destroying a porch canopy and damaging the front of the house.

Police Chief Bill Mizner said the late-model SUV was northbound Tuesday on South 13th Street when it crossed the median, hit a sign, crossed both lanes of southbound 13th Street, jumped the curb and struck the house at 306 S. 13th St. near its front entrance.

The SUV was driven by Robert L. Peterson, 76, of Yankton, S.D., who was taken to Faith Regional Health Services in Norfolk.

Mizner said police were investigating the possibility that Peterson suffered a medical problem at the time of the crash. He was listed in stable condition Tuesday night, a hospital spokeswoman said.

People were inside the house when it was hit, but Mizner said he was not aware of anyone other than the driver being taken to the hospital.

The canopy over the front porch

collapsed, the front door was knocked in, and the car was lodged in the wall of the home. No damage estimate was available.

The late Johnny Carson — longtime host of "The Tonight Show" on NBC — lived in the house for much of his childhood. Born in Corning, Iowa, the family moved to Norfolk in 1933. The home was one of Carson's first stages, where he performed as his magical alter ego, the Great Carsoni. He graduated from Norfolk High School before attending the University of Nebraska.

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CHILD WELFARE PRIVATIZATION

Heineman, lawmakers at odds over solution

By PAUL HAMMEL
WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

clusion of a months-long study of the troubled privatization effort. The issue is certain to fuel a red-hot debate next month, when the State Legislature convenes its 2012 session and tackles an issue that has consumed lawmakers for decades: how best to deal with troubled kids. State senators released an extensive report last week that was highly critical of the state's two-year effort to priva-

tize its child welfare system.

Private companies, rather than government workers, took over the task of managing the cases of abused and neglected children under state care.

The report skewered the "Families Matter" initiative, saying it was launched without a good plan and without adequate financial evaluation.

Expenses have increased 27 percent while the number of state wards has increased, service providers and foster homes have become fewer and case management has gotten worse.

Krist said the current structure of the child welfare system isn't working and must be changed. A child welfare department needs to be "dissected" from HHS to improve management and financial oversight, he said, adding that HHS has become too large.

"It's a monster," he said of HHS. The department handles social services, services for the elderly, public institutions and public health.

Both Krist and Campbell said the state

See Welfare: Page 2

Report finds corps' river management manual lacking

By DAVID HENDEE
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Army Corps of Engineers needs a 21st-century field guide as good as its officers and engineers to deal with the climatic extremes that produced this year's unprecedented Missouri River flooding, according to an independent panel of experts.

While praising corps personnel for doing all they could to avert the worst of this summer's flooding, the review

panel described the Master Manual — the corps' river management bible — as a less-than-perfect guide.

The 99-page report agrees with corps officers and civilian engineers who said from the start of flooding in late May that runoff totals unmatched in recorded history were too much for federal dams to handle.

In the end, there was little more the corps could do, said Dr. Neil Grigg, a

See River: Page 2



Robert Nelson will resume his column Dec. 26.



Biggest Auto Loan Sale of the year is coming!

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Briefly

METRO AREA

Girl driving car that hit officer is arrested

A 17-year-old Omaha girl is under arrest after a police officer was hit by a car Tuesday in northwest Omaha.

Laura M. Kramer, 17, was booked as an adult on suspicion of felony flight to avoid arrest, possession of a controlled substance and evidence tampering.

Officer Jacob Bettin, a police department spokesman, said the girl was not arrested on suspicion of assaulting an officer.

"We're still investigating what exactly took place," Bettin said.

Officers went to check on a suspicious vehicle about 6:50 p.m. Tuesday near Standing Bear Lake, near North 144th and Fort Streets.

The driver accelerated and hit an officer, who was taken to the Nebraska Medical Center as a precaution and has since been released, Bettin said.

Officers fired on the vehicle before it stopped in a residential neighborhood southwest of the lake near North 150th Street and Butler Avenue. Kramer's residence is east of where the car halted, near Alice Buffett Magnet Middle School.

Police have not named the officer hit. Two female passengers who were taken in for questioning have been released, Bettin said. — Sam Womack

Three arrested after 7 stolen vehicles found

Police on Tuesday recovered seven stolen vehicles from a northwest Omaha neighborhood.

The investigation began when an officer spotted several vehicles driving recklessly near 52nd Street and Hartman Avenue about 10:30 a.m.

One of the vehicles, a blue BMW, crashed into a yard. The driver ran east on Himebaugh Avenue, said Officer Jacob Bettin, a police spokesman.

Additional officers and a K-9 unit searched the area and took two people into custody who fit the description of the BMW driver.

As officers investigated, they discovered several stolen vehicles, including a black Toyota Sequoia. At least four people were questioned at an apartment complex at 5700 Henninger Drive.

Police arrested three people and booked them on suspicion of theft by receiving: Davonta Williams, 20, of Omaha; Stevie Madison Hill, 19, of Papillion; and John Tyson, 18, of Omaha. — Sam Womack

NEBRASKA

Beatrice patient accused in stabbing

LINCOLN — A resident at the Beatrice State Developmental Center has been jailed in Lincoln, accused of using a pen to stab a woman.

Joshua Talbot, 20, was in Lincoln for an appointment on Friday. He'd been driven from Beatrice by two supervisors. When the three stopped at a gas station, Talbot escaped.

Lincoln police spokeswoman Katie Flood said Talbot entered an office nearby and went to the second floor, where he used a pen to stab a female employee twice in the neck. The woman's injuries were not considered life-threatening.

A Lancaster County jailer said Talbot remained in custody on Tuesday. Online court records don't list Talbot's attorney.

The Beatrice center special-

izes in the residential treatment of people with various developmental disabilities. — AP

Man pleads guilty in meth conspiracy case

LINCOLN — A federal jury has found a Lincoln man guilty for his role in a Nebraska-based conspiracy to make methamphetamine.

Federal prosecutors said 45-year-old Mark Skoda of Lincoln was found guilty of conspiracy to manufacture 500 grams or more of methamphetamine. The verdict capped a four-day trial in U.S. District Court of Nebraska.

Prosecutors said four co-conspirators accused Skoda of making about 630 grams of methamphetamine over a 20-month period. The operation was located just east of Lincoln.

Skoda faces a possible 20-year prison term when he is sentenced in early March.

This case was investigated by the Lancaster County Sheriff's Office and the Lincoln Police Department. — AP

American Indian conference in Lincoln

LINCOLN — Lincoln will play host to the largest American Indian advocacy group in the United States next year.

The National Congress of American Indians plans to hold its midyear conference in June. The event is expected to draw 800 to 1,200 tribal leaders and advocates.

The organization's Annrae Steele said it chose Lincoln based on a strong bid by the city's convention and visitors bureau and because so many members live in and around Nebraska.

The meeting provides tribal leaders a chance to address major issues facing Native Americans, including those related to sovereignty, economic development and gambling. — AP

IOWA

Girl unharmed in attack at bus stop

SIoux CITY — Sioux City police are looking for a man who tried to assault a 16-year-old girl waiting for a bus.

Police say the attack happened Tuesday morning. The girl told police that an unknown male grabbed her from behind, covered her mouth and threatened to hurt her.

She escaped when a car passed and the attacker released her. The teen ran home. She was not hurt.

Detective Troy Hansen said the suspect had a mask or scarf over his face, and police are looking for witnesses. — AP

MIDLANDS

HUD announces most funds yet for homeless

Nebraska and Iowa will share in a total of \$1.47 billion in federal funding to battle homelessness that was announced Tuesday.

U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan awarded \$1.47 billion to renew funding to more than 7,100 local homeless programs operating across the country in 2012.

The funding announced is \$62 million more than 2011's total, the most homeless assistance ever awarded by the department.

Nebraska will receive \$4.2 million from the grant, and Iowa will receive \$7.7 million.

Welfare: Heineman warns of what a new system will cost

Continued from Page 1

should be able to leverage more federal dollars to help finance the changes and defray state taxpayer expenses. They also said they want to spend money more efficiently.

"At this point, I don't think we can say how much more it will cost," Campbell said. "It won't cost less."

Krist said every state that has successfully privatized its system has increased spending.

Lawmakers launched their investigation in February amid growing controversy over the privatization initiative.

Starting in November 2009, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services contracted with five private agencies to provide services

for children and families in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Since then, three of the five agencies have lost or dropped their contracts, citing financial and management issues. That forced the state to resume providing services in some rural areas of the state and to rework contracts with the remaining providers.

Heineman said, it's time to talk with lawmakers and others about what can be done to address a complex and challenging issue.

"Hopefully, we can find some common ground," he said. "We do need to bring some stability to what we're doing."

Campbell and Krist agreed.

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Gibson: Sarpy County wants to honor former pitcher, Omaha native

Continued from Page 1

sculptor. One of his noteworthy projects in Omaha is the 9-foot bronze of Martin Luther King Jr. between the City-County Building and the Douglas County Courthouse.

The immediate challenge is to find corporate sponsors and private donors. Polikov said models of the statue could be used as recognition gifts for major donors.

Sarpy County tourism director Linda Revis said a statue would provide a gathering place for fans and a place to learn about

Gibson's life.

Revis called the first season of Storm Chasers baseball a success and said the bronze statue of Gibson would only enhance the fan experience. Last summer, the team drew about 425,000 fans to Werner Park.

Bena said he plans to help raise donations through a number of civic organizations.

"I think this will be an iconic part of this stadium for years to come," he said. "It will be a nice gateway to the park."

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Bob Gibson, right, and fellow Hall of Famer George Brett shake hands after Gibson caught Brett's honorary first pitch at the opening of Werner Park in April.

TONY MICELI/WORLD-HERALD NEWS SERVICE

Crash: Occupants home but reportedly not injured

Continued from Page 1

The house was purchased by two South Dakota investors in 2003 for \$150,000. Jim Pruett of Brandon and Rick Runge of Sioux Falls painted and repaired the house and also sold bits and pieces of plaster and flooring on eBay.

At the time, Pruett and Runge

approached Carson about buying the house, or at least describing to them how it looked when he lived there. Carson responded, but he told them he didn't really remember what it looked like.

In May 2003, Pruett and Runge tried to sell the house to the City of Norfolk, to no avail. By November 2003, Pruett and Runge

were asking \$119,999.

After Carson died in January 2005, Pruett and Runge listed the house on eBay, and it was purchased by Historic Properties Inc. of Norcross, Ga., which specializes in saving and restoring historic buildings throughout the United States. The selling price was reported as \$93,000.

A spokesman said at the time that the company intended to use the house to pay tribute to Carson. However, since then the home has been rented and was recently put up for sale again.

World-Herald staff writers Emerson Clarridge and Kirby Kaufman contributed to this report.

Council clears path for ads in sports complexes

By JUAN PEREZ JR.
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Omaha residents can soon expect to see advertising posted inside city sports complexes, after the City Council unanimously voted to approve such ads Tuesday.

Advertising will be permitted at city sports fields, tennis complexes, indoor ice arenas, trap and skeet ranges and golf courses. The city's Parks Department estimates the measure will produce roughly \$279,000 in revenue in the first full year in 2013.

Those interested in advertising will need to use the city's competitive bidding process and comply with yet-to-be-deter-

mined guidelines established by the Parks Department.

The measure approved by council members already contains some provisions: all advertising must be posted within buildings or "face inward within the complex," no advertising of tobacco or tobacco-related products, no advertising of alcohol or alcohol-related products if the facility isn't licensed to sell such items, no gambling ads and no ads for adult entertainment or "illegal activities."

An amendment, proposed by council member Chris Jerram, also prohibits advertising of weapons, firearms and ammunition unless such ads depict a pub-

lic safety officer in uniform or a military person in uniform.

Weapons ads also could be allowed inside any city-owned shooting range.

Revenue generated from the advertising will go into a dedicated fund to pay for maintenance and improvements at city sports complexes.

The Parks Department says it will complete annual reports to assess the program and solicit input from the public on the facilities' use of advertising.

In other council news: The council unanimously approved a \$45,250 measure to install new LED street lighting for downtown Benson. OPPD will

put in the new light fixtures, and Benson Business Improvement District funds will repay the construction cost, with interest, over the course of the next decade.

The council approved roughly \$205,000 worth of payments as part of legal settlements. One of the payouts, for \$85,000, will resolve a federal lawsuit filed over a police search a northeast Omaha home in 2007. The other payouts would pay a hospital bill for a man who died at the city jail in 2007 and settle a lawsuit filed after a police chase last January that ended with the fleeing vehicle crashing into a man's home.

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Council: Second lobbyist is approved on 4-3 vote

Continued from Page 1

and Ben Gray voted in favor.

David Dover, Suttle's deputy chief of staff, said the additional lobbying work will supplement Cheloha's ongoing work with state representatives.

In addition, he said, Cheloha spends much of the year in Omaha. O'Hara Lindsay is in Lincoln year-round.

Former State Sen. John Lindsay is a principal of the lobbying firm, which also represented the

city during the 2011 legislative session.

The firm was paid \$73,000 to represent the city's interests as the Legislature considered several bills that put millions in city funding at risk. Next year's pay-

ments would be made monthly and could end at any time, at the discretion of the Mayor's Office.

Lindsay did not return calls seeking comment.

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River: Report faults river management manual

Continued from Page 1

Colorado State University civil engineer who led the technical review of how the corps managed the river this year.

"We found no acts of negligence or problems of that nature that created or exacerbated the flooding," Grigg said.

In a teleconference, the panelists, while acknowledging some room for improvement, said corps personnel did an outstanding job managing the flood.

"We felt the corps did an extraordinary job under a lot of duress and stress," Grigg said. Flood victim Scott Ward of Dakota Dunes, S.D., remains skeptical.

"It's total bunk," he said. "It's hard to imagine that you could have the scale of flooding we had and the corps gave us one week's warning. They knew what was coming for four months and did nothing to avert it."

Record runoff from rainstorms and melting snow overwhelmed the corps' ability to prevent flooding. Cities and rural areas from Montana to Missouri experienced unprecedented flooding as the corps passed

water out of its large Missouri River dams.

A summer of high water burst through levees and encroached on towns, destroying farmsteads, businesses, dwellings and highways. The damage is expected to tally in the billions. The corps estimates its bill to repair levees alone at \$588 million.

In hindsight, the panel agreed with the corps that having more room for flood storage behind the agency's big dams and releasing water sooner could have reduced the effects of the flood — but they would have needed more flexibility from the Master Manual to do so effectively.

"It's important to understand that there's a tricky balance in trying to find the optimum way to operate the system," Grigg said.

The panel noted that the corps had nearly all its normal flood storage available on March 1 and released additional water in March and April in response to increasing runoff forecasts.

"But they could not have foreseen the need to evacuate storage faster to accommodate the heavy rain that occurred during May," the report says.

The findings mirrored those of an October in-depth report by The World-Herald on how little room the corps had this year to manage the river differently.

The corps will study the possibility of changing storage allocations.

"The parameters have changed, so obviously they're going to have to leave more room in the pond to have some flood control," said Lynn Binder, a Table Rock, Neb., farmer whose farmland in Nebraska, Iowa and Missouri was flooded.

Ward, whose Dakota Dunes house was saved by an emergency levee built across his yard, said the corps is capable of managing the river.

"If they do it right, it can be done right," he said. "We could have avoided the flood damage we saw in 2011."

Grigg, the Colorado State professor, said dams and levees can only do so much. People who live and work in the flood plain also need to accept responsibility for being in harm's way, he said.

"We were a little bit surprised as we talked with residents that they were not more aware of the risk they were taking by being

in the flood plain," Grigg said. "They tended to think they were going to be totally protected by those dams. ... A lot of education needs to be done."

Brig. Gen. John R. McMahon, the corps' Northwestern Division commander, said officials will review the report to determine what elements of the panel's recommendations can be incorporated into the agency's plan for operating the river in 2012.

"Some of the recommendations may take time to implement," he said.

McMahon said the corps continues to pay attention to winter snowpack depths and is busy repairing levees along the river.

The report is the first outside review of how the corps managed the river this year. It is the result of more than two months of analysis, interviews and research by four authorities in hydrology and water management.

"This is a very important ... first step for the corps to be held accountable to the people of the Missouri River basin who we serve," McMahon said.

Contact the writer: 402-444-1127, david.hendee@owh.com

Goodfellows donations

Goodfellows contributions reported today of \$10,745.56 boost the 2011 tally to \$335,729.15.

Balance forward..... \$324,983.59

\$2,500 Anonymous.

\$1,600 Anonymous.

\$1,000 Streck Inc.; John J. Billotte.

\$600 Faculty and staff of the Ralston Public Schools.

\$500

Mike Hansen; in memory of R.N. and Inez Nelson and Carl and Wanda Jensen, by Gloria and James Nelson.

\$300 The fifth grade students of Grace Abbott Elementary School.

\$250 In memory of Paul Phillips, from his family, Humboldt, Neb.; Leonard and Charlotte Ver Maas, Gretna; Jim, Sara, Ben, Sam and Maggie.

\$97 In memory of Robert and James Knapp from Bob, Betty, Laura and David.

\$200

\$195 GFWC/NFNC Bennington Woman's Club, Bennington.

\$150 Dale and Sue Ellen Hannappel, Lincoln.

\$100

In memory of Walter Rohling Sr., Dorothy Rohling and Walter Rohling Jr., by Carol Mosley, Wayne, Neb.; Mary Kay and Dale

Davenport, Bellevue; in memory of Tanner Schatz, by his brothers and sisters; Allan and Colette Robertson; in honor of John R. Beilke, by Kirsten Jameson, Portage, Mich.; Steve and Claire Willoughby, Papillion; anonymous; anonymous.

\$97 Boys Christmas Lunch.

\$75 Amy Lyons; in memory of our parents, by Hugh and Colleen Spellman.

\$50

\$50 In honor of Ken and Myrna Peters, by Christopher Whitaker, Carroll, Iowa; in memory of Patricia Mason, by Vic Mason; in memory of Roger, by anonymous.

\$40

\$40 In honor of Dan and Mary Loring, by anonymous.

\$33

In memory of Mary A. McKay, by Jerry, Tim, Kathy and families, Bellevue.

\$25 Mary McGrath; Patricia K. Leamen; in memory of Rose Marie Sojka, by James Sojka, La Vista; in memory of Mary Eliza-beth Dooley, by Pat Smith, Bennington.

\$24.50 Elizabeth, Benjamin, Andrew, Samuel and Abby.

\$20 Karla Ermel; in memory of our parents, by Daniel and Colleen Betts.

\$15 J.D. Eddy.

\$1.06 Ron Venclauskas.

Today's total\$10,745.56

Total to date\$335,729.15