

Into the 21st Century



RVFD surveying the damage after the 1989 Light Plant explosion

The citizens of Randolph literally exploded into the next twenty five year period when the City Light Plant burned down after an explosion on the day after Christmas in 1989. Fire Chief Lavern Scott explained that a natural gas line was leaking and gas crept up into the rafters and was ignited. Fortunately no one was hurt. Also in this year another structure on Broadway Street, the Randolph State Bank, which dated back to 1890, was torn down because of deteriorating conditions. A Veterans Memorial Monument, honoring all area service men and women, now stands in the bank's place.



Veteran's Memorial Monument located on the corner of Broadway and Douglas

A group of investors purchased Wm. Galvin and Son Implement and renamed it Randolph Farm and Equipment. It was the investor's goal to keep a viable and vital business in the Randolph Community which would continue to provide area producers with equipment repair and service.

Dr. Henry Billerbeck retired in 1988 after bringing many of our local residents into the world. He had served

our community for over 36 years. Dr. Glenn Ridder and his family were soon welcomed to Randolph.

Numbers declined on small family farms during the 1980's due to high interest rates and low crop and livestock prices. It was sad to see the foundation on which this area was built crumble. People were forced to make decisions to quit farming and move to other locations. Numbers in graduating classes dropped into the 40's compared to numbers in the 60's and above that were graduating in the 1970's. Two major businesses, Rokahr's John Deere and Wattier's Grocery Store, closed during these times because of retirement and no interest from new buyers.

Surveys were sent to local residents to get ideas and suggestions on how to bring new businesses and industries into the area in hopes to lure new families to Randolph. A Randolph Development Corporation was formed and local editor, Toby (Marvin) Taylor, was hired to tackle this quest.

In 1989, the City Council adopted an ordinance to officially close the city landfill and initiated the operation of a city-wide garbage collection. All households were assessed for the service. This was also the year that residential streets were being improved by paving streets with asphalt.

The second weekend in June was designated Honeyfest weekend to promote Randolph's unique claim of being the "Honey Capital of the Nation". A committee was formed with members of the local honey producers who put together a celebration that coincided with the Alumni Reunion. A Honeyfest logo was designed and appeared on T-shirts and coffee mugs for all to purchase.



Dr. Henry Billerbeck

The beginning of the 90's brought new challenges to our nation as Iraq's leader, Saddam Hussein, a name we will never forget, and his troops invaded Kuwait. The United States joined other nations to stop this conflict, thus the Persian Gulf War, also known as Desert Storm, began. The people of Randolph and of the surrounding area have

always been committed to fight for what this country represents. Many of our military members have spent time overseas serving their country, not only in peaceful lands but in lands surrounded by conflict.

In 1990, plans for the Randolph Community Pantry were developed and the pantry was readied to serve and assist the needy and ill living in the Randolph School District.

In a public meeting, the formal dissolving of the Sholes school district #76 and the joining of Randolph school district #45 took place at the Cedar County Courthouse on April 16, 1990. The teachers from Sholes worked on an agreement to place them in the Randolph school system.

In July of 1990, the Randolph City Council passed an ordinance to enter into an agreement with Lotto Nebraska for the formation of a Randolph lottery. The decision of where to put the lottery was an issue for the council as it had to be within the city limits. A recycling program headed by the Randolph Jaycee's was also approved by the City Council.

A committee was formed in 1991, to determine if the Randolph Community Golf Course could be developed in the southwest part of town. It was in June of 1992 that the first golf club was swung on the new nine-hole course. A clubhouse was also erected at this time and the public can stop in and enjoy a meal at anytime.



Welcome sign at the Randolph Community Golf Course

The Randolph City Office moved into the empty Rokahr John Deere building in 1991, giving them ample space for meetings, storage and community service. It was also at this time the Presbyterian Church was torn down because it was no longer in use. A new home built for the Willis Stueckrath family occupies this lot at 201 North Cedar Street.

An Avenue of Flags was planned by Randolph VFW Post #5545 and Lutheran Brotherhood Branch #117 for Memorial weekend in 1992. The flags border the pathways at the Randolph City Cemetery and at the St. Frances Cemetery.

The Senior Class of 1993 had the honor of being the 100th class to graduate from Randolph High School. Thirty students went through the graduation ceremony compared to one graduate, G. Arthur Benedict, in 1893.

1994 was the year that The Randolph Area Ventures Incorporation was formed. The group was structured when two organizations, the Randolph Area Development Corporation and the Randolph Community Club, merged in January. One of their first projects was to help recruit for a new pharmacist as Vincent Hartz decided to retire after forty years of being in business.



Construction on the new Randolph High School

The community of Randolph decided in 1995 it was time to say goodbye to their 1911 high school building and construction was underway for a new addition. This building included new classrooms, offices, a lunch room and a gymnasium. A sad turn of events occurred when all the old school records were discovered to be unsafe because of animal contamination and had to be destroyed.

A newly welcomed addition to Randolph happened in 1996 as a convenience gas station called Pronto was built on the west edge of town. Besides gas, they offer a noon special, a quick snack, some smaller household items and, most important, a cup of coffee and a place to "sit a spell" each morning to hear the local news.

The community welcomed Dr. Almuhammad Alfrhan as their new physician. The Doctor indicated that he looked forward to getting acquainted with everyone. He was a graduate of the Damascus University School of Medicine in Damascus, Syria, and had completed his residency in Chicago. Along with this news, the community saw what a lot of hard work and determination can do as the new Randolph Rescue unit vehicle had arrived and was ready to be put to use. The cost of the new ambulance which was a little over \$76,000 was covered by donations from the city and rural fire board as well as, money from numerous fundraisers held.

Their faces are the same, but their name is different. The Randolph Jaycees adopted a new name, new look and new goals around Randolph, starting in the fall of 1998. They are now known as R.O.A.R.; (Reaching Out Around Randolph.)

It was in the late 1990's that the world was really starting to go Hi-Tech and the people of Randolph were

not going to be left behind. Internet service and computers were becoming more popular in our homes and a wealth of information was only a “click of your mouse” away. Advanced as the computer seemed the big concern for 1999 was the big Y2K, were computers smart enough to recognize the year 2000, or would it roll back to 1900? Thank goodness, we were able to “browse” into the next century with no problems.



Sherwood Apartment Fire- May 2000- Located at the corner of Broadway and Main Street

The main street of Randolph was hit by another big fire in May of 2000. This time it was the Sherwood Office and second story apartments. The Bank of Randolph was completely destroyed. Once again the Firemen of Randolph kept the fire under control and no one was hurt. We cannot thank these volunteers enough for the sacrifices they go through.

A new addition to the community of Randolph was the expansion of assisted living to Colonial Manor’s building. The addition gave our elderly residents an opportunity for apartment living with assistance when needed.



Colonial Estates Assisted Living Facility

Our 2000 Census showed once again, the population of Randolph was declining; as we went from 983 residents to 955. Cedar County as a unit had a 5 percent decrease.

A new four unit apartment complex called Five Star Apartment was built on the corner of Douglas and Wayne in 2001; it was a welcomed addition to our downtown area. Other new items being built at this time were a new restroom/concession stand at the city park, a new city shed and a new parking lot for the City Auditorium was poured where the Dart Oil Company once stood.



Five Star Apartments

A proud occasion for the Roger’s family and the community of Randolph occurred in February, 2001, when Patrick Rogers, son of Joseph and Edna Rogers, became a District Court Judge. Patrick and his father had a law office in Randolph for a number of years.

As optimism grew in our area, reality hit our country. Terrorists targeted the United States on September 11, 2001, and killed thousands of people by high-jacking airplanes and flying them into the World Trade Center buildings in New York City. It was a day that we will never forget. Once again our young people in this area enlisted in above average numbers as we prepared to go to war with Iraq.

Rural residents received new addresses in 2002. The 911-address system was designed to help any emergency vehicle team locate people in a faster period.

The citizens of Randolph decided there was a need to build a new library and fundraisers started in 2003, with completion, and dedication for the new Lied Library was held in 2007. A meeting room, Genealogy room and computer area were welcomed additions.



Lied Randolph Public Library

People of all ages and religions gathered to help Randolph’s First United Methodist congregation consecrate the new church building in 2003. A potluck dinner was served following the ceremony with an Open House in the afternoon.

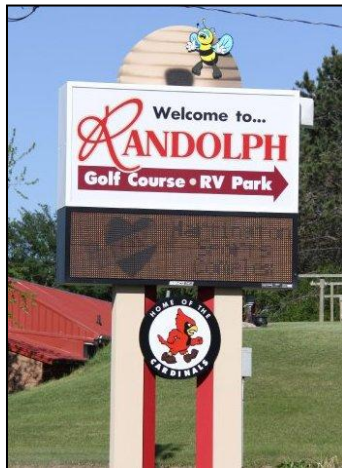
A Randolph soldier was awarded a Purple Heart medal for wounds received in action. Tony Bach, the son of Dan and Mary Ann Bach, was injured June 4, 2004, in Iraq when an IED exploded next to his truck.

With constant declines in State Aid to our local school, meetings and public hearings were held to discuss different ideas about handling this problem. When the dust all settled, a four day school week was decided upon beginning in the fall of 2006. Osmond and Randolph will also be sharing a superintendent. Another big decision for the school board to decide was closing the elementary school kitchen. Beginning in the fall of 2008, the elementary children ride busses to the high school building for their lunch.

In 2006, the Randolph Times reported two couples in the community had the great distinction of being married for seventy years. Frank and Violetta (Kalvelage) Reineke were married on January 21, 1936. Harrison and Varedo (Raubach) Huwaldt were married on June 21, 1936. As for the reason for longevity, both couples felt it was because of cooperation and learning to work together.

Ethanol plants in the surrounding area may have brought a new paradigm to reflecting corn prices in 2006. For the first time in ten years, a bushel of corn could be sold for over three dollars. In 2008, prices for a bushel of beans rose above fifteen dollars and farmers could get over seven dollars for a bushel of corn. Not only did the price of grain go up but also the price of land per acre. One could easily be paying over three thousand dollars an acre or renting for over two hundred dollars an acre. These are numbers that our forefathers would never have believed could be possible. Prices for grain have dropped some but land prices continue to grow.

A new digital "Welcome to Randolph" sign greets anyone driving by on Highway 20. The sign informs people of upcoming events while also giving the date, time and temperature. The Marquee was made possible in 2008 by donations from the Randolph Area Foundation.



Located at the corner of Main Street and Highway 20

Baseball games begin with honoring the nation we live in thanks, in part, to the Randolph Junior Legion baseball team. A flagpole was dedicated by the VFW and Auxiliary ladies in the summer of 2008. Another welcomed addition to the Veteran's Memorial Park was new playground equipment which was purchased through donated funds and constructed through volunteer efforts. This is a true testament to the community spirit which exists in Randolph.

Randolph became home to a new housing development in 2009, due to efforts of Vision Point LLC working in cooperation with the city of Randolph. Over 30 years have passed since this community has seen a housing development built here. Eleven lots were available just south of the City Golf Course which are considered non flood plains area.

Wind Farms is a popular term heard in recent months as large wind turbines are being constructed in Northeast Nebraska. Towers standing 300 feet high with a propeller stretching 65 feet across are designed to convert wind energy to an electrical source of energy ready for distribution.

"Have you had your shot yet?", was a familiar quote in the fall of 2009, as H1N1 better known as the Swine Flu, was making its presence in the United States. Although some fatalities were recorded in Nebraska, none existed in our area. Another familiar quotation for the winter season of 2009-2010 was "How deep are the snow drifts in front of your place?" Northeast Nebraska was repeatedly hit with snow storm after snow storm. Numerous roads were closed, schools were closed and holiday gatherings missed because of the 50-60 inches of snow that was received in December and January.



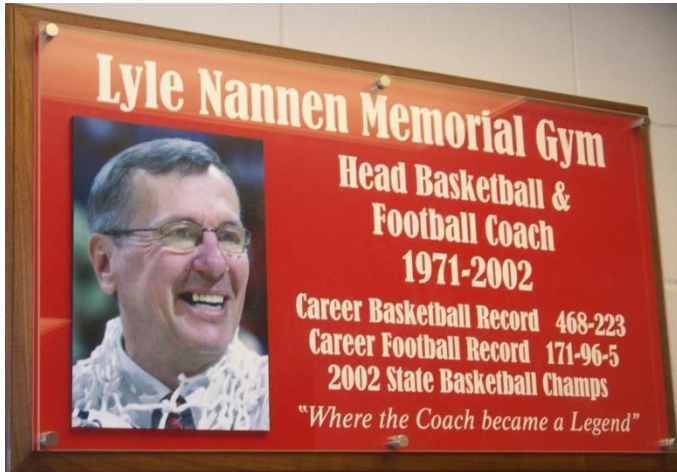
Gene and Kyle Korth after 2010 blizzards

A number of businesses have celebrated anniversary dates of when they first opened. Paul Loberg had an Open House marking 30 years of being in business since 1979 when he bought the welding shop from Louie Broer. The Senior Citizen Center celebrated 25 years of continued service to the fine people of Randolph. Jerry's Hilltop have fed the multitudes for 40 years since they purchased the café from Toot's uncle, Harry Meier, in 1969. Many a stranded motorist has been thankful for their generosity during a snowstorm. Dan Tunink of Diversified Insurance celebrated 30 years with an appreciation dinner. The First State Bank celebrated 75 years of being a mainstay of downtown Randolph since 1935. An interesting fact of information to be noted is that only four presidents have operated the bank since its opening day; Frank Stegge, Vernon Viergutz, Tom Riedmiller and Mark Linville.

Nebraska's Finest Meats has opened its doors for business. The locker on Broadway Street will be offering

only all natural meats that have been organically maintained. The owners, Paul and Kelly Rosberg have also opened up a Fitness Center in the building next to the lockers.

A dedication ceremony to name the high school gym the Lyle Nannen Memorial Gym was held during the Alumni Basketball Tournaments in April of 2009. Lyle passed away January 7, 2009, and had been the head basketball and football coach at the Randolph High School from 1971 to 2002, ending his career with a state basketball championship in Lincoln in March of 2002.



Dedication plaque

There were some football players missing on the field in the fall of 2010 as Randolph went to an eight man playing team now qualifying as a class D1 school.

The brick streets in Randolph have always been a

unique feature to our town, but the residents decided that the time had come to replace them by paving the downtown streets. A special one percent sales tax was voted on and passed in the 2010 May Primary elections to help fund this project.

Reflecting over the last twenty five years, we realize our numbers are getting smaller whether it is with families, farms or businesses, but our pride continues to be strong. The spirit and determination that our forefathers brought to this area over 125 years ago still run deeply through our blood. Friends and neighbors always find the time and energy to help out someone who is going through some difficult time whether it is a Benefit Dinner, Harvesting Bee, Raffle and Bake Sale or just a hug and comforting words. We all understand that someday we may be in their shoes.

Only God knows how the community of Randolph will look in the next twenty five years, but for right now, we will face the changes and challenges with open arms and strength of mind one day at a time.



Randolph Brick Streets looking East on Broadway



Facing East on Broadway