

Beavers, Bieseemeiers are grand marshals

Written by Darci Tomky

Four familiar faces will be leading the “There’s Country in the Air” Phillips County Fair Parade Saturday, July 27 during the annual celebration on Interocean Avenue in Holyoke. Jerry and Judy Beavers and Bud and Bonnie Bieseemeier have been named the 2013 fair parade grand marshals.

Jerry and Bud served as Phillips County commissioners for 12 years, both elected in 2000 for service from January 2001 to January 2013.

“I was honored,” said Jerry after hearing he was named one of the grand marshals for the fair, a sentiment echoed by his wife Judy and the Bieseemeier couple.

“It’s a great way to wrap up how we’ve worked with the county,” added Bud. “It was a great honor to serve the county.”

“I’ve appreciated the county a lot ... a pure pleasure,” said Jerry.



This year’s grand marshals for the Phillips County Fair Parade Saturday, July 27 are

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pictured from left, Judy and Jerry Beavers and Bud and Bonnie Biesemeier. □ □

—Enterprise photo

Both said they didn't get too many complaints during their 12 years as commissioners, and both commented on what "great crews" they had to work with in the road departments of their districts in the county.

The Phillips County Event Center was one of their greatest accomplishments. The project, eight years in the making, was celebrated at a grand opening in November 2010, where the 32,000-square-foot facility at Phillips County Fairgrounds was featured. Groundbreaking took place in September 2008, and the first fair was held there in July 2010.

The building, which replaced an old structure from 1940, includes three meeting rooms, an education wing, additional offices, a commercial kitchen, a hollow-core mezzanine deck with storm shelter and landscaping.

"I really doubted we could ever swing it," said Jerry. "The community backed us ... It turned out great."

A lot of grants and donations from local people made the Event Center possible, said Bud. "We did a lot more on the building than we ever thought," he said, noting Dragon's Wagon Preschool, CSU Extension and Phillips County Family Education Services all have permanent homes in the Event Center. "It really made it useful," added Bud.

Another great accomplishment from their 12 years of service to the county was the switch to the baler system at Phillips County Landfill in 2002. This method, compared to the previous practice

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of burning the trash in an incinerator, will really benefit the county in the long run, they said.

Some of Bud's favorite committees during his time as commissioner were the Northeast Health Board and the Colorado Workman's Compensation Board. Jerry enjoyed his time on the Council of Governments and the Northeast Colorado Transportation Board.

Southern lowans make Holyoke home

Jerry and Judy both were born and raised in southern Iowa farm families. Growing up close to one another and attending school together, the two began dating in between their freshman and sophomore years of high school.

Judy got an engagement ring at their high school graduation in 1957, and they were married in 1958.

Since Jerry was in the Navy for four years, they spent time in both Hawaii and San Diego, Calif., before heading home to Iowa to farm for nine years.

Jerry and Judy were on their way to a vacation in Colorado when they stopped in Sterling to see a veterinarian they knew. Before they knew it, they heard about a job proposal for a farmer needed to farm 10,000 acres and 22 irrigation circles for Don Lebsack southeast of Holyoke.

Judy laughed when she said she'd never been to Holyoke before, but she sure had a farmer in her house just right for the job! "It was a freaky deal," they said of the opportunity that popped up out of the blue.

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Lebsack bought them a house, and the Beavers family made a new home in Holyoke with their three kids (Kathy Olofson, Lisa Brown and Steve Beavers).

“People took us in,” said Judy. “It was amazing how friendly people were.”

“We weren’t going anywhere,” said Jerry.

He noted in Iowa there were small patches of farmground around the land with corn, beans, hay and cattle, compared to the vast fields found in Phillips County where he mostly farmed corn.

In 1978, Jerry made a career working for Reimer Smith Grain Co., followed by Wright Lorenz and finally the local Holyoke Co-op where he worked in the chemical, fertilizer and agronomy departments.

Judy began working for Reimer Smith in 1976 as a bookkeeper, a job she kept until 1993 when she took on her current job as deputy assessor for Phillips County.

She has been involved with P.E.O. and Eastern Star while Jerry has participated in the Lions Club, Masonic Lodge, Elks Club and Scottish Rite. The couple has also attended the Methodist Church.

Jerry and Judy have seven grandchildren and two great-grandkids.

Bieseimeiers have long history in Phillips County

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Bud was born in Paoli to a farm family who settled in the area after moving from Nebraska. Since his dad farmed, Bud grew up helping on the farm.

He was all set to head off to school after graduating from Haxtun High School in 1948, but his dad said, "Oh, I thought I would have some help on the farm in the fall," and it didn't take much convincing for Bud to stick around Paoli.

Bonnie was born in Burchard, Neb., but moved to Venango, Neb., where she attended school from second grade to her sophomore year. They then moved to Paoli, just a half mile north of where Bud lived. Bonnie's dad was a road worker as well as a farmer.

Bud had helped them move in, and Bonnie rode the school bus with his sister. Bud said something to his sister about the elementary school girls that road the bus with her but was soon corrected that they were high schoolers. It wasn't long until Bud and Bonnie met and hit it off.

Bonnie graduated from Haxtun High School in 1950, and the two were married in August that year.

For 50 years they lived in the Biesemeier home three miles south and one mile west of Paoli before moving to Haxtun in 2000. Their three children are Nancy Dee, Connie Reutter and Brian Biesemeier. They have eight grandchildren and four great-grandkids with three more on the way.

Bonnie was a housewife and homemaker, and Bud continued as a farmer with mostly dryland wheat as well as some dairy cows for several years.

They attended the Methodist Church in Paoli, which Bud's grandparents helped start, until it merged with the church in Haxtun where they now attend.

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Bud has been involved with the Masonic Lodge, Elks Club, oil board in Haxtun, Federal Land Bank board in Sterling, District Farm Credit board in Wichita, Kan., Lions Club and Scottish Rite. Bonnie was involved in P.E.O. and with events and activities at church.

Phillips County changing with the times

After their years in Phillips County, the Beavers and Bieseemeier couples had a chance to look back on the progress of the communities in this area.

Bud said he thinks the population has generally stayed the same over the years. But as travel gradually became easier, businesses began gravitating toward Holyoke.

The 1960s was a time where irrigation really began to thrive in Phillips County which definitely changed the outlook for farmers. Bud said when he was a kid, farmers in the area mainly harvested wheat, barley and oats. Farms also continue to get larger as time goes by.

Another big change Bud has seen is the move from dozens of small school districts scattered around the countryside, conveniently close to farmsteads, compared to the two school districts in Holyoke and Haxtun today.

The grand marshals also mentioned the increase of oil and gas wells in the county, a boost to the Phillips County economy and a big change seen in just the last few years.

The two couples look forward to seeing familiar faces and catching up with the community at the July 23-28 Phillips County Fair.

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“The fair board is to be commended,” said Jerry, noting how much work these volunteers put into every fair.

During their time as commissioners, Bud and Jerry noted they saw the fair getting better year by year. They compared the fair to when their children were involved and noted what a difference the community support makes in things like the junior livestock sale.

The community is invited to see Jerry, Judy, Bud and Bonnie as they proudly lead this year’s Phillips County Fair Parade Saturday, July 27.

Holyoke Enterprise July 11, 2013