

Training offered on being a respite care provider

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Persons interested in becoming a respite care provider, or wanting to learn more about respite, may register online or call to attend training that will be offered Aug. 28.

The training will be offered from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Harms Advanced Technology Center on the campus of Western Nebraska Community College in Scottsbluff, Sherri Blome, respite coordinator at the Nebraska Statewide Respite Network, said in a press release.

Blome said space is limited and interested persons should register soon either online at <http://www.panhandlepartnership.com/training-academy.html> (scroll to REST Training) or call 308-432-8190. Pre-registration is required and lunch will be furnished.

Training topics include the definition of respite, handling emergency situations, disability awareness, dealing with behaviors, feeding, transferring, hygiene, confidentiality, building relationships with the family and the care recipient, fun activities to do during respite time, and more.

“Participants will receive the education and tools needed to be confident and successful in providing respite care to adults and children,” Blome said. “We will also help prepare respite providers to provide crisis respite if the need should arise. Trained participants may apply to become a part of the Nebraska Respite Network database of respite providers.”

This training is made possible in part by a federal IDEA Part C grant awarded to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services from the Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Special Education in collaboration with Panhandle Partnership for Health and Human Services.

Analyst: Nebraska government cash reserve remains healthy

LINCOLN (AP) — Nebraska state government has maintained a healthy cash reserve and a general fund balance that is above the minimum required by law, a legislative analyst said Wednesday.

In response, members of the Legislature’s Tax Rate Review Committee decided that no changes were needed to the state income and sales tax rates this year.

Fiscal office director Michael Calvert told the committee the reserve “remains healthy,” with a projected balance of nearly \$729 million. The state’s general fund is projected to have \$289 million remaining at the end of the current two-year budget cycle, which is \$17.2 million above the minimum required by law.

“Cash flow is not an issue for us,” Calvert said.

The cash reserve balance accounts for roughly 16 percent of the total revenue the state is expected to collect annually during the current two-year budget period.

Workshops offered for tree boards

Free tree board trainings from the Nebraska Forest Service will be offered in Gering and several other Nebraska locations this summer to help tree board members, administrators and volunteers work more effectively in their communities.

Urban forests are being challenged by exotic pests, weather extremes and budget cuts. These workshops are aimed at helping tree board members understand their role in community planning, learn how to evaluate and care for community forests, and do public outreach to recognize the many benefits trees offer in urban settings.

The only Panhandle training will take place from 5-8:30 p.m. (register at 4:30 and meal included), Aug. 12, at the Gering Civic Center.

Other locations will be Holdrege, Columbus and Omaha.,

To register for the free training, contact Amy Seiler, Nebraska Forest Service, at 308-633-1173 or aseiler2@unl.edu. More information is available at <http://nfs.unl.edu/tree-care-workshops>.

Gering tennis club invites participants to fundraiser

The Gering tennis club would like to invite participants to their fundraising event Friday, July 24, and Saturday, July 25.

A tournament is taking place for money to be raised for diabetes. Stop by the tennis courts at the Gering High School to play or to donate from 6 p.m. on Friday to 6 p.m. on Saturday. “Any level of player is welcome or people could just stop by to help out,” said event organizer Matt Palomo.

The Gering tennis club has done an event like this for six years and this year the money raised will go to helping people effected by diabetes.

Palomo expects 30-50 people to participate.

Donations can be sent to Live Change Connections, P.O. Box 1344, Scottsbluff, NE 69361. For more information, contact Palomo at 308-641-9379.

Nebraska Court of Appeals upholds man’s homicide sentence

LINCOLN (AP) — The Nebraska Court of Appeals says the five- to 10-year prison sentence of a York

man for a fatal crash that killed an Aurora teacher was not too lenient.

The decision came Tuesday in the appeal by York County prosecutors, who argued that Otis Newcomb's sentence last year was "excessively lenient."

Newcomb pleaded no contest in July 2014 in a plea deal that lowered a vehicular homicide charge and dismissed another charge.

Authorities say Newcomb had been drinking when the van he was driving on Highway 34 near York in November 2013 collided with a pickup. A passenger in the pickup, 31-year-old Lauren Akerson, was killed. Others in the pickup were injured. Akerson, the daughter of Vern and Jennifer Meyer, grew up in Bayard and graduated from Bayard High School.

The appeals court says that while the sentence may have been somewhat lenient, "it was not excessively so."