

2021 COMES TO A CLOSE

When the calendar year 2020 ended, many people looked to new opportunities and hope for 2021. Unfortunately, 2021 will enter and exit as one of the most volatile years in modern history. Tensions in this great nation are uneasy to say the least. 2021 makes you ask, "Why is everyone mad, and how did we get here?" Rural Nebraska often feels immune to many of the issues facing the nation, or even Omaha or Lincoln, but as we continue to fight this ongoing and never-ending pandemic, we are starting to realize that we are not immune to the current mental state of society.

As much as we hate to continue to talk about the pandemic, the reality is the pandemic has changed who we are. How long will we let it continue to change us before we refocus on returning to common values of humanity? It doesn't seem to matter what profession or demographic you are in, you get the feeling everyone is livid, volatile, and opiated about everything. The state of our society at this current time period has become alarming to say the least.

When social media originated, many critics sounded alarms about the impact that social media would have on our lives. Those critics are now proving to be correct, as we struggle to adapt to the power of media platforms, and how they have changed how we interact with others on a daily basis. We have become creatures that crave information, but we often fail to get all the information and settle for headlines to create our opinion. In addition, social media platforms only provide the information they want the audience to see. The Pandemic and digital information are only a couple of examples of how our society is being changed, but they are important.

Entering 2022, as a community and society, we need to diligently work to do better. The current environment we are creating for our kids and future generations is not one that is positive or healthy. Nationwide, we are seeing an increase in behaviors, mental health concerns, and anxiety amongst our youth. We cannot continue our current path of individual destruction. Our time to change is now. Unfortunately, we closed 2020 very similarly to that of 2021, hoping for a better new year. To simply hope for a better 2022 without making incremental changes in how we act towards each other will leave us asking for better in yet another year. I am hopeful 2022 will bring with it positive changes in how we treat, respect, and encourage each other. Keep in mind, our youth are watching!

Please take the time to enjoy the Holiday Break with family and friends. The second semester of the 2021-2022 school year will begin on Friday, January 7th.