**For Release Wednesday, July 7, 2021**

**Capitol View**

***Commentary by J.L. Schmidt***

**Statehouse Correspondent**

**Nebraska Press Association**

**Drama in Lincoln, Fun Times in the Panhandle**

The Legislature has adjourned. Football season hasn’t started. Awkward time in Nebraska, but there’s still a lot going on.

There’s drama at Memorial Stadium where popular University of Nebraska Athletic Director Bill Moos has retired or been retired. It was all so sudden for folks who believed the 70-year-old with big plans for the future of the sprawling athletic complex on the Lincoln campus would finish his career here, but not abruptly.

It is just so hard not to read a dramatic scenario into what may really just be a retirement. Moos admitted that navigating the ship through the Coronavirus Pandemic was tiring. He said he was told the end of June would be the best time for the University to accept his retirement. *I’m not buying it. We’ll just have to see what leaks out.*

Just a week after public appearances by four finalists for the job, the Capital City has its first female police chief ever. The mayor tabbed 55-year-old Teresa Ewins of San Francisco for the top job. She’s leaving a 25-year career as a commander with the California police department where she was responsible for more than 600 police officers.

She’ll be in charge of 350 in Lincoln’s department, which officially started in 1870. She said only about 1 percent of the police chiefs in the United States are women. She received the endorsement of the Lincoln Police Union. She apparently impressed those who interacted with

her by saying she wants to be the “communicator-in-chief.” *That’s commendable and I hope it works for all concerned.*

**For Release Wednesday, July 7, 2021 – Page 2**

The Governor says it's time to get back to normal. He has let the state of emergency declared in March 2020 because of the pandemic expire. He said he wants to see kids back in the classroom without masks whether or not they have been vaccinated. Nebraska had 224,330 recorded cases of Coronavirus and 2,259 deaths.

To his credit, he did tell the media that “the vaccine works.”   
 In what may not seem of consequence to Nebraskans, Kearney native Jon Bokenkamp -- the creator of the popular NBC television drama “The Blacklist”-- announced that he was stepping down as co-producer and exiting the show after eight highly successful seasons.

“The Blacklist” launched in 2013, with Megan Boone starring as FBI agent Elizabeth “Liz” Keen alongside James Spader as criminal mastermind Raymond “Red” Reddington. Season 8 ended with Keen killed off. With a ninth season on the horizon and a controversial season finale in the books, fans might wonder what will become of their favorite show when it returns this fall.

Bokenkamp’s parting statement said he “genuinely believes the series remains full of life, creatively strong, and that bright days lie ahead.” *I’m a big James Spader fan, but we’ll see if he can carry the load by himself.*

Finally, July 8-11 is the 100th anniversary celebration of Oregon Trail Days in Gering. Trail Days board member Bill Schlaepfer said, "Oregon Trail Days is the longest, continuous running celebration in Nebraska.” Further, he called it “Western Nebraska’s safe, fun-filled weekend."

*Perhaps the best thing about the venue is that you can actually see the Oregon Trail from Gering.*

-30-

*J.L. Schmidt has been covering Nebraska government and politics since 1979. He has been a registered Independent for more than 20 years.*