Pantry of Hope  Submitted by Mike Molacek

Some facts of those in need in Nebraska:

* 61.6% live week to week or day to day
* 46% sometimes, often or always skip meals because of a lack of food.
* 69% sometimes, often or always need help from multiple programs to have enough food.
* 64% sometimes, often or always must choose between buying food and paying bills.

Hope’s Pantry continues helping our community. 285 food items were distributed from October 20 – November 17, 2016. The Pantry exists to help hungry people. Your generous donations help those in need.

Foods that you enjoy at your house are perfect to donate. We make good use of all non-perishable items. Currently juices, pasta dinners, toothpaste, and shampoo are needed.

Thanks for your donations to the Pantry.
Hope Church is blessed to be able to help out for a once-a-month ministry at Siena-Francis House. We serve meals at Siena Francis House – and are scheduled (nearly) every 1st Saturday of each month. Time invested is only a few hours (4 pm - 7 pm) and the signup sheet is located in the Narthex on the side table. Not much is easier than that – and the rewards are immense! Please sign up to help serve...it is a worthwhile project that Hope Church has embraced wholeheartedly! If you are interested in your family, friends or small group taking over a month (all by yourselves), please contact Mark Canady or the church office for more details. Not much is easier than that – and the rewards are immense! Please sign up to help serve...it is a worthwhile project that Hope Church has embraced wholeheartedly! If you are interested in your family, friends or small group taking over a month (all by yourselves), please contact Mark Canady or the church office for more details.

Our next meal to be served will be December 3. Please sign up to help out!

WINTER NIGHT WATCH 2016-2017

Hope Church has been a part of this program for over 20 years. We provide volunteers two Fridays each month to ride the mobile Emergency Disaster Van dishing out food. Because of the generosity from the people of Hope we are also able to provide coats, hats, gloves, and socks to the men & women who use this program.

This season we will need two volunteers for each of the following dates:

December 2nd and 9th - January 6th and 27th - February 3rd and 10th

If this is something you think you might like to do please check your calendars as this mission opportunity fills up fast. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

HOPE LEAF RAKING TEAM

Thank you to the entire team who helped our congregation members clean up their yards two weekends in November. We had a team of over 20 volunteers this year.

OPEN DOOR MISSION PROJECT SANTA DRIVE THRU CHRISTMAS

Hope mission committee is really excited to announce our 4th year of supporting the Open Door Mission Project Santa Drive Thru Christmas on Saturday, Dec 17 from 2pm – 5pm. Last year Hope’s team was a HUGE success with over 30 Hope congregation members and friends on our team and this year we want to have a Hope team of at least 40 participate in this life-changing mission project. Open Door Mission Project Santa Drive-through Christmas project provides poverty stricken families with the opportunity to provide their children with a fun and enjoyable Christmas experience. Impoverished families are able to receive bibles, books for their children’s education, food pantry items, diapers for babies and infants, as well as a large bag of toys for each child in their family as they drive to various receiving stations around the Open Door Mission campus. This is a very fun and extremely rewarding activity where you directly touch the lives of many impoverished families!
Average Attendance for October 150

Session Committee Email

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paula Washka</td>
<td>Caregiving Ministry</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pollyanders@cox.net">pollyanders@cox.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracy Comba</td>
<td>Youth Ministry</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tcomma@cox.net">tcomma@cox.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian Claus</td>
<td>Mission Ministry</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Adult Ministry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jayne Molacek</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rus Kosits</td>
<td>Associate Pastor</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Ruskosits@yahoo.com">Ruskosits@yahoo.com</a></td>
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Church Staff

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dave Matsumura</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rus Kosits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morgan Bailey</td>
<td>Brooke Thompson</td>
<td>Nursery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kacey Basilico</td>
<td>Sydney Tomsen</td>
<td>Nursery</td>
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Church Leadership

HOPE GIVING TREE

Loving others is a lifestyle that we all try to live by each day. We are always taught it is better to give than to receive because that is the greatest gift in the world. Especially during the Christmas season we feel overwhelmed with the Lord’s spirit to have a giving heart. The Hope Giving Tree provides us all with the opportunity to experience that great joy when we give more than we receive. The Hope Giving Tree will be set up at the end of November in the Narthex with many Christmas presents tags with names of families and children from Omaha schools who could use our help this season. You have the opportunity to help make an Omaha family’s Christmas just a little brighter. Many of these families are living paycheck to paycheck or are just down on their luck and could benefit from your generosity to brighten their day. Please take a tag or two from the Hope Giving Tree, purchase the requested gifts or more and bring them back to the Giving Tree with the tag attached by Sunday December 11 so they can be delivered in time for Christmas. Please contact any Mission Committee member or Lillian Fehr (402-830-5454) for more information.

MISSION SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH

Submitted by Brian Claus

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20:35)

During this Advent season, we reflect on the influence a promise can have on our lives. God promised each of us salvation, and kept that promise with the birth of Jesus. That promise sustains and uplifts us, during good times and challenging ones.

When we understand this deeper meaning of a promise, we also understand each of us has a special responsibility to make, and keep, faithful promises of our own. The Christmas Joy Offering is one way to do that. Each gift received equally supports two vital promises for our faith.

Through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, the Christmas Joy Offering assists church workers and their families during times of need, giving back to those who have spent their lives in the service of the church. The program provides grants for housing supplements, income assistance, and pastoral vocational leadership needs.

Continued on the next page.....
Mission Spotlight of the Month—Christmas Joy Offering Continued from Previous Page

The Christmas Joy Offering also supports the education and development of our future leaders at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges. These schools are dedicated to nurturing opportunity and creating environments where diverse students can succeed from a foundation of Christian values. The Offering benefits Menaul School and Presbyterian Pan American School, two secondary schools that ready students for a path of higher learning, as well as Stillman College, where graduates are prepared for lives of leadership and service.

When you give to the Christmas Joy Offering, you help sustain these promises and uplift our brothers and sisters in Christ by reducing their burdens and opening new paths of opportunity.

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING - GIVING TO THOSE WHO SERVE SO FAITHFULLY

It’s been more than 50 years since Jim Irwin learned first-hand what help from the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions—which is supported by gifts from the Christmas Joy Offering—means to the families of church workers. And he’s never forgotten. In 1962, Jim’s father, a pastor who had served small rural parishes across the country, died suddenly from a heart attack. He left behind four sons who were in the midst of pursuing their educations, one son who had just started his own pastoral career, and a wife who was suffering from Parkinson’s disease. The Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions stepped in with housing help and long-term assistance. Mrs. Irwin was able to live out her years comfortably, in the Sterling Presbyterian Manor in Kansas. The assistance also meant her sons could continue their educations without taking on additional financial burdens. Jim went on to medical school and became a surgeon. Every year, he and his wife, Francie, give faithfully to the Christmas Joy Offering. Whenever he makes his offering, Jim reflects on the assistance his mother received so many years ago, and what that support means to so many families today. Jim says, “We’ve always supported the Christmas Joy Offering because it contributes to the well-being of those who have made a life decision to serve the church.” The Christmas Joy Offering is a way to give back to those who have given so much in service.

Please give generously through any of these ways:
- Hope church will have special offerings during services on Dec 18
- Send a check to Hope Church designated for Christmas Joy Offering
- presbyterianmission.org/give/christmasjoy

Links for more information
- Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions
  http://www.pensions.org/PlansAndPrograms/AssistanceProgram/Pages/default.aspx
- Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges
  http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/resc/
- Menaul School
  www.menaulschool.com
- Presbyterian Pan American School
  www.ppas.org
- Stillman College
  www.stillman.edu

Thanks:
- Hugh Carter for continued work on the sanctuary light replacements
- Cleaning Day workers: Everett Kelley, Pastor Rus, Pat Stigge, Ron Stigge, Jody Botsch, Bob Reeks, Janie Borsch, Ken Anderson, and Jayne Molacek
- Kurt Briley for repainting the front entry posts and scheduling the winter sprinkler service
- Ron Stigge for repainting the front entry parking
- Mike Dierking for folding chair repair and storage room door repair
- Lorin Toman for ballast and lamp replacements

Punch list discussion:
- Budget 2017
- Sanctuary replacement chair seats installed on October 17.
- Snow removal contract signed on October 26.
- Ordered entry floor mat.
- Met Mulhall’s rep for deck area landscape design.
- Upstairs classroom visibility ideas. Mike following up with Midwest Siding and Paint.
- Painting? holiday week of December 26 – December 30 - Associate Pastor, Finance Office, Gym Entry and Grade 1-3 classroom wall.
- Gym south storage window covering – Dick to address
- Insurance comparison quotes – Grinnell, Church Mutual and The Insurance Board
- Agreed to help Jacob by assisting with sidewalk install. Kurt to check availability.
- Check out snow shovels, brooms, salt and heat tape for down spouts.

Rachel Circle Christmas Luncheon

December 15 at 11:15 am at the Egg & I Restaurant located at 2855 S. 168th Street (168th & Center). We will be playing Take-Away-Bingo, Bring a $10 wrapped gift with no name tag, to be used as game prizes. All are welcome!

For reservations please contact Beanie Huston 402-895-3958

Thank you!

I want to thank all of you that helped make my 89th birthday so special! It is comforting to know how so many of you care for one another. I’ve read & reread my many birthday cards. Thanks for your love—Ruby Thornwall
Fellowship  Submitted by Tracy Comba, Fellowship Elder

For all you trivia fans, check your calendar and mark down Saturday, January 14, at 6:30 pm, for a night of trivia fun! We will have 8 rounds of trivia, each round will have 15 questions of one topic – anything from Broadway Shows to Nebraska Trivia to Country Singers. You can form your own team (teams will ideally be 8 people or 4 people per team – it will depend on how many participants we have) or you can just show up, and we’ll find you a team! We ask that everyone bring a snack to share and $3 to cover costs. Drinks, paper plates and napkins will be provided. Winners will get a small prize, as well as bragging rights. Bring your friends; everyone is welcome!! Watch for more advertisements and a sign-up sheet in the Lobby.

We are still looking for volunteers for the food committee for next year’s Fellowship Tea, which is set for April 1. We are already formulating plans for the luncheon menu. If you love looking at recipes and, more importantly, sampling the research, please contact Tracy Comba or Sharon Neubauer if you are interested in joining this committee. Meetings will begin in January.

We continue to look for volunteers to provide fellowship on Sunday mornings after service. If you are interested, there is a sign-up sheet on the Narthex table, one on the refrigerator in the kitchen, or you can email me at tcomba@cox.net. Thank you!

Session Highlights  Submitted by Jayne Molacek, Clerk of Session

- Minutes of Regular Session Meeting on October 18, 2016 were approved. E-mail votes from November 3, 2016 were approved.
- The October Clerk’s Report was approved.
- The October Finance Report was approved.
- Motion from Finance Committee that we have a balanced budget without any plug numbers added. This would include not using any CD money. Seconded and carried.
- Motion from Building and Grounds to allow the Home School Group to extend their time in the building by two hours a day on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. This would also increase their rent each month. Seconded and carried.
- Finance presented the preliminary budget to Session. Session worked on the 2017 budget and will finalize at the December meeting.
- Committee Annual Reports are due to the church office by 5:00 p.m. on January 10, 2017.

Dear Friends,

Twas the month before Christmas and all through the mail
Our boxes were crammed with catalogues of stuff on sale
Our credit cards were jammed with receipts from the store
While our eyes kept on looking for just one more

But what did my soul long to hear in the distance?
Joyous singing of songs of peace for instance.
Good will to all with harmony and hope
And grace given freely to those on a rope.

Was this a mirage? Does any of this ring true?
Yes, Christmas singing in church to cope with the blues.
Come one and come all! Jesus bids us come in
Come in from the cold, come in from the din.

Peace Jesus gives, comfort, rest and deliverance
From hatred and prejudice and all that’s askance.
Come and worship the true king, come worship and feel
The joy that God gives when we turn and kneel.

This Advent period building up to Christmas is a wonderful time to prepare our hearts and homes for the celebration of Jesus entering our lives. He didn’t flinch when he saw the messiness in our hearts, but went bravely to clean and purify our relationship with God the Father. I hope you will join us in worship on Sunday mornings at 9, in classes for all ages following fellowship time, and in special worship opportunities such as our Blue Christmas service on the 18th at 6PM designed to be helpful for those who have experienced loss, our Christmas Eve services at 4 and at 6 PM, and the rare treat of worshipping on Christmas morning when we celebrate the gift of Jesus that God gave to the world.

Shalom,
Pastor Dave
For unto us a child is born, 
and he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, 
Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually, 
and the reign of 
justice, righteousness and peace 
will have no end.

– Isaiah 9

This is the Christmas message that is included in the Children’s, Youth and Caregiving Christmas cards that are being sent out this month. There is a lot in these few short lines from Isaiah – certainly enough that it would take some time to understand it all. As jam packed and full as our lives can seem this time of year, there is even more – and of greater importance – in the scriptures that can help us to know how we should think of Christmas time. Beyond a well known and comforting birth of a child, and the celebration that ensues, there is a foundation laid for Christians in what we are to expect from the Messiah, and in turn, from our following of the “Prince of Peace”. Most of the time our readings selected from the well-known Isaiah passage hits the highlights we are more comfortable talking about, and often glosses over the reality of the hardships that most people have experienced throughout human history. The hopefulness of a new light entering the world is powerful (Isaiah 9:2) because the darkness is so great, and so consuming.

Our middle schoolers have been delving into some of these complexities. Their studies have focused on the themes of Christmas and its meaning, how they are different and similar, in the Matthew and Luke Christmas stories. They are working hard, and will be presenting their understanding of Christmas, and in turn, from our following of the “Prince of Peace”. Most of the time our readings selected from the well-known Isaiah passage hits the highlights we are more comfortable talking about, and often glosses over the reality of the hardships that most people have experienced throughout human history. The hopefulness of a new light entering the world is powerful (Isaiah 9:2) because the darkness is so great, and so consuming.

It is my hope that by offering this challenge and opportunity to our youth, to delve deeper into the meaning of Christmas, practice intentional faith exploration and allow it to be expressed in worship leadership, that they will begin to make connections in how they can be part of a greater Christian tradition that can offer hope, through Christ, to a community and world that suffers. I am looking forward to the blessings of this season that we find not only in the Christ child of long ago, but of the children of Hope Presbyterian in our midst today.

Notes from our Associate Pastor
Pastor Rus Kosits

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and he will be called
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Notes from our Associate Pastor
Pastor Rus Kosits
But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see— I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

Luke 2: 10-11 NRSV

Finance Submitted by Dave Fehr

The Finance Committee and Session are in the process of figuring out how to most effectively budget the money that is coming in for 2017 in the form of pledges. Let me say a heartfelt thank you to those who have already turned in your pledge for next year. As of this writing, $321,000 has been pledged so far. It is looking like we will need somewhere in the neighborhood of $380,000 in pledges to meet our needs for next year.

If you haven’t turned in your pledge yet for next year think about all the different ways Hope has affected so many lives in so many positive ways for yourself and others. We have been developing our youth on mission trips, helping in the community such as at the Siena Francis House, helping Abide ministries rebuild North Omaha, raking yards for our seniors, growing our understanding in education classes, offering numerous fellowship opportunities, offering valuable care when in dire need, developing new relationships, developing our faith and spirituality, providing a great worship experiences, to name just a few. All of us have very special relationships of one kind or other at Hope. Consider committing more of yourself and resources to Hope Church and experience God’s grace.

There are numerous ways to give to the church besides the traditional offering plate. Giving electronically though automatic bill pay with your bank is very easy and painless. It’s sort of like having money withheld from your paycheck, you don’t miss what you don’t see. Your bank can help you set this up at no cost to you or the church.

You can also donate stock to Hope church by transferring shares to the churches account at Charles Schwab. It is that time of year to be thinking about reducing your tax liability. This is a win/win opportunity as it eliminates all your capital gains taxes and it can also be counted towards your pledge if you desire. Jayne Molacek or I can help you with this process.

You can also donate via our web site at www.hopepresbyterianchurch.org. I encourage you to check out the web site. It’s that time of year when we are generous and giving to our family, friends, and organizations. Consider giving a special Christmas present to the church in the form of a special Christmas donation.

Another way to contribute to the church is to leave a legacy behind by including the church in your will and designating part of your estate to the church.

I wish you and your family a Merry Christmas. God Bless.

Dave Fehr
This Advent season, we prepare for the birth of God’s son. We can also think about the risen Christ and how to be like Him and serve Him. If you have questions about what is offered at Hope for you or members of your family, please stop by the Education office and introduce yourself to Rus Kosits, Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Family Ministry. You may also contact Rus at ruskosits@yahoo.com or 402-895-4044.

If you have questions about programs for Adults or Youth (Grades 6-12 including Confirmation/YNMC) you may also contact Carol Rudesill at GmaCarolR@aol.com or 402-598-1890.

For Children’s programs, contact Darci Davis at darcildavis87@gmail.com or 402-995-1255.

COME TO HOPE IN DECEMBER AND PREPARE FOR THE BIRTH OF CHRIST ALL MONTH!

Children and adults worship together at 9:00 a.m. Sundays. Rus does messages with great visuals which are fun for children and adults. At 10:00 a.m. there is time for fellowship in the lobby or the gym, with food and beverages in both places! Please invite visitors to join you and introduce them to others. At 10:30 children and youth are invited to check out the Sunday school classrooms on the upper level. Parents or other adults might like to check out our Advent DVD Series and discussions in the sanctuary on December 4, 11 and 18. People of all ages can build relationships with others and with God. You can offer hospitality, ask if people have questions and invite them to come again!

"THE PURPOSE OF CHRISTMAS"

Why is Christmas such a big deal?
December 4 - Purpose 1: A Time for Celebration
December 11 - Purpose 2: A Time for Salvation
December 18 - Purpose 3: A Time for Reconciliation

SHARE THIS INVITATION WITH OTHERS!

This Advent season we remember God’s greatest gift to us in the birth of His son Jesus. You might understand the purpose of Christmas in a new way through this 3-part DVD series. Gather in the sanctuary from 10:30-11:30 a.m. For more information call/text Carol Rudesil at 402-598-1890 OR call Pastor Dave at 402-895-4044. OR Email: GmaCarolR@aol.com or revmats1@yahoo.com

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY IN THE LIBRARY RESUMES IN JANUARY

The Sunday morning Bible Study group will take a break for December to allow people to choose to join in with others for the Advent Study in the Sanctuary. In January they will resume with their ongoing study of the Old Testament. All are welcome to come and add your ideas to the knowledge of others. Reading and discussing is the name of the game in this casual class. For information you may contact Rev. Charles Bulger at 402-861-1904 or email clandgb@q.com.

PASTOR DAVE INVITES YOU TO JOIN HIM THURSDAY MORNINGS

The Hope library is a great place to gather with Pastor Dave and a small group of people Thursday mornings at 10:00 a.m. They will finish a study of Proverbs in December and make plans for a new study to begin in the New Year. This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know and understand the Bible – one chapter and sometimes one verse at a time. No prior Bible knowledge is required. Plan now to join the group! Contact Pastor Dave for more information.

MEN’S BREAKFAST EVERY SATURDAY MORNING AT 6:30 A.M.

This is a group for guys who have limited time, are interested in learning more about what the Bible says, and who can get up early! They are studying “Life Lessons from Jesus” by Bill Hybels and John Ortberg. Join them each Saturday at 6:30am at the Summer Kitchen Café in La Vista. Contact Josh Widman at joshwidman@cox.net or 402-651-4366 for more information.

PAGE TURNERS TO MEET AT LAZLO’S

Page Turners meet Tuesday, December 13 at 11:00 a.m. for lunch at Lazlo’s and to discuss a light mystery book, Stone Cold from New York Times bestselling author C.J. Box. Joe Pickett, still officially a game warden but now mostly a troubleshooter for the governor, is assigned to find out what the truth is about a massive ranch in the remote Black Hills of Wyoming, but he discovers a lot more than he’d bargained for. There are two other men living at that ranch. One is a stone-cold killer who takes an instant dislike to Joe. The other is new--but Joe knows him all too well. The book can be found on the table in the lobby. Contact Georgia Bulger at 402-861-1904 or clandgb@q.com.

WOMEN ON WEDNESDAYS – GROWING RELATIONSHIPS

Women are welcome Wednesdays from 1:30-2:30 in December as we discuss “The Purpose of Christmas” DVD series for three weeks. In January, we will get to know some interesting Women of the Bible and get to know each other. If you would like to know more, please contact Carol at GmaCarolR@aol.com or call 402-598-1890. Bring your friends and neighbors!

WOMEN’S GROUP FOR PRAYER, DISCUSSION AND FELLOWSHIP

The women’s prayer group will take time off in busy December. We welcome all women to join us the fourth Monday in January as we continue reading and discussing The Case for Grace by Lee Strobel. Learn more about grace and its transforming power through true stories shared by the author. During each meeting, we seek to grow deeper in faith, develop deeper friendships, and devote time to prayer. Meetings end at 8:00 pm with optional fellowship time until 8:30 pm. Each chapter of The Case for Grace stands alone, so come whenever you are able. Please contact Julie Reeks at 402-880-0042 or email her at juliereeks@gmail.com if you’d like a book or more information.

Youth in Middle School through Senior High meet each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. Come weekly to find out what is being planned on Sundays or other times for youth. Grab a snack during the 10:00am fellowship time and chat with friends before class. Bring your ideas and challenges to a class for your age group that will attempt to meet your needs. Grow in your relationships with God and others.

Youth Groups are for youth in grades 6-12! Parents are also welcome!

Middle School and Senior High will meet together for these activities:
Dec. 11 - 11:30 a.m. Shop for Families in Need (Adult drivers needed.)
Dec. 17 - Saturday Time TBD. Open Door Mission Project Santa

Contact Rus Kosits at ruskosits@yahoo.com or 402-895-4044 for more information.