

Northwest Rural

Public Power District

Hay Springs, NE 69347

October 2025

4-H Concession Stint Grows into Popular Catering Business

Twenty-nine years ago a Sheridan County Rancher and his wife were traveling through Thedford when he was intrigued by a food trailer. Bob Hinn made the suggestion to his wife Tess, she should do that. Who would have believed a simple suggestion would develop into nearly a three decade long catering business in the Sandhills of Northwest Nebraska. Tess Hinn teamed up with her longtime friend Carol Vincent for the adventure. From a few dozen cinnamon rolls to an entire spread for a wedding party of 300, often times serving the rehearsal supper, breakfast, lunch and then the wedding reception to top it off.

"We started at the Sheridan County Fair at the concession stand where we made everything fresh on site," said Tess. "We were first ... the originals," said Carol. Then the families began merging while their business blossomed. You see Tess's daughter Emilee married Carol's son Clint! Tess and Carol operated the 4-H Concession stand for about ten years, in the meantime with the suggestion of Tess's late husband, they named their expanding business "C-T Catering".

C-T Catering began branching out taking their delicious meals on the road. Where did these gals learn to cook? Mainly experience. Carol did major in Home Economics at Chadron State College while Tess earned a degree in landscaping, however she prepared large meals out on the family ranch south of Rushville for the hay crew.

First big catering job was a Pow-Wow at the Calico Community in South Dakota. "I remember being such a hit with the kids, because we had nachos!," said Carol. From there, clients started reaching out more and more. Next thing you knew, they were serving at weddings, bull sales, auc-



C-T Catering often gets additional help from family members, from left Emilee Vincent, Carol Vincent, Sissy Hinn and Tess Hinn.

tions, funerals, graduations, birthdays, retirements and Christmas parties. "We can even serve a hot meal out on the prairie," said Tess. "We've had a few trial and errors with hay crews," she recalled.

Wherever they are, C-T Catering is all about presentation. One particular wedding was near a river at Interior, S.D. served under a huge tent. The furthest they have traveled was to Sioux Falls, S.D. where they served 350. Another example of a wedding in South Dakota was where there was no grocery store. "We went through Rapid City and stocked up. We ended up serving four meals for the wedding party," said Tess. The ladies have served at each others kid's weddings.

Around 2016, Tess's longtime friend Zac Kraenow, who took lots of pictures for the Hinn's Bull sales got involved in the catering business. His specialty - cooking and smoking meat. "His first job was preparing pork loin and the more he cooked the better he got, his specialties are brisket which he has now perfected, pulled pork and prime rib," said Tess. C-T Catering also makes their own barbecue sauce. Once he smoked 160 lbs. of prime rib for the Gordon Community Hospital. "Zac is a lot of help in setting up and transferring in addition to his meat preparation. Not sure how we do it without him now,"

Some of the popular requests are Texas potatoes, mac n' cheese, along with a big variety salads and vegetables, beautiful veggie trays, deserts galore. It's
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your choice!

When you book your event, Tess and Carol will sit down with you and ask you what you would like.

One request came from a film crew making "East of Wall" in 2023 who had special requests for vegans gluten free and nut free. Other special requests have included kabobs and pie for a wedding. Each of the ladies prepare some of their favorites. For instance Carol bakes all the homemade rolls and decorated cookies while Tess has a different selection of cookies she makes. They also have help with meal prep from Emilee and Sissy who are both excellent cooks. Kylee Hinn also bakes cookies as well.

If you are interested in booking an upcoming event, it's suggested that you do it well in advance. For instance they are already booked for six 2026 graduations. On the other hand they may be available on a shorter notice. Tess and Carol help organize and serve the funerals at Immaculate Conception Church in Rushville..

Their business is inspected, licensed and insured. "I have a catering kitchen at my house," noted Carol. Transporting the prepared food is another crucial step in which they use cambros and alto-shams. They also reheat in roasters or on the grill.

You would think the catering business would be about a full time business, but both ladies have been employed in the office at Sheridan Livestock, Carol at 30 years and Tess with 26 years. They had to take a a

It didn't take a long time before Zach Kraenow mastered smoking brisket, pulled pork and prime rib. He has it down to a fine art.



two month hiatus from catering when they both managed to break their ankles within a month of each other in 2022. "We missed a couple of years but managed to get healed up in time for Pieper's Bull Sale," said Tess. C-T Catering typically takes a break following Christmas through the end of January when they go to Mexico.

Both Carol and Tess are also busy with their three
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Countryroad Shot: Dawes County April 2018

East of Crawford just north of Bethel Road on Betson Road. Almost in the shadow of Crow Butte. If you look straight south from the school house this is what you will see. The two-track is Betson Road.

~ by Jim Manternach

If you are interested in a print, you can contact Jim at jmm@millcomps.com or at www.jimmphoto.com



Just one of the many weddings C-T has catered.



NRPPD Line Superintendent Trampas Belknap presents new Journeyman Lineman Cole Coss his certificate of completion.

Northwest Rural Lineman Completes Journeyman Course

Northwest Rural's Lineman, Cole Coss, a native of Oshkosh recently earned his Journeyman Lineman certificate in August. He began his duties at NRPPD on May 9, 2022 after graduating from Mitchell Tech Powerline Construction and Maintenance. He grew up and graduated from Garden County High School in 2021.

He previously was employed at D & Investments for two years in addition to Decock Construction also for two years.

Coss applied to NRPPD because he believed it would be a great location with multiple opportunities. "I wanted a career where I could help people and work outside," explained Coss. He is enjoying meeting new people while working at different job sites.

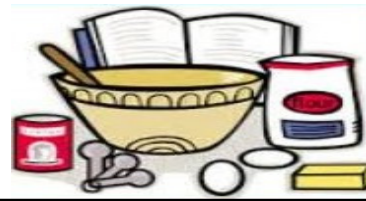
He lives in Hay Springs and enjoys hunting, fishing and camping in his free time.

C-T Catering--

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adult children. Carol and husband Roger have two sons and a daughter: Clint, Matt and Kristen in addition to nine grandchildren. Tess and her late husband had three, Emilee, Casey and Blake with seven grandchildren. She and her fiancée Zach, son Casey and wife Kylee and grandson Brooks live on the ranch with her.

For more information about C-T Catering, you get visit their Facebook page or call 308-360-1112 to set up a meeting to get started planning your event.



Recipe Corner

Zippy's Shepherd's Pie

- 1 pound potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 (14 ounce) can beef broth
- 2 tablespoons ketchup
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon mild curry powder
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- 1 (16 ounce) package frozen mixed peas and carrots
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 cup shredded extra-sharp Cheddar cheese
- salt and pepper to taste

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add potatoes, and cook until tender but still firm, about 15 minutes; drain, and return to pan.

While potatoes are boiling, heat oil in a large skillet. Cook ground beef with onion, red pepper, and garlic until beef is evenly brown. Stir in beef broth, ketchup, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, and curry powder. Bring to a boil, and simmer 3 to 4 minutes. Mix cornstarch with a little water to form a paste, then stir into skillet with tomatoes, peas and carrots. Cook until thickened; season with salt and pepper. Spoon into a casserole dish.

Preheat oven on broiler setting. Add milk and butter to cooked potatoes, and whip until smooth and creamy. Spoon over meat mixture. Sprinkle top with shredded cheese.

Place under broiler for 3 to 5 minutes, or until cheese is melted and speckled with brown.

Spooky Halloween Eyeballs (Taste like peanutbutter cups!)

- 1 ½ cups creamy peanut butter
- ½ cup butter, softened
- 2 ½ cups confectioners' sugar, sifted
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 12 ounces white chocolate, chopped
- 2 tablespoons shortening
- 2 drops blue food coloring
- ½ cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips
- 2 drops red food coloring

Beat the peanut butter and butter with an electric mixer in a large bowl until smooth. Beat in the sugar and vanilla. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Roll chilled dough into small, eyeball-sized balls and place on 2 baking sheets lined with wax paper. Refrigerate for another 30 minutes.

Melt the white chocolate and shortening in a microwave-safe glass or ceramic bowl in 30-second intervals, stirring after each melting, for 1 to 3 minutes (depending on your microwave). Do not overheat or chocolate will scorch. Dip each eyeball into the white chocolate and transfer to the waxed paper until the chocolate has set. You can chill them in the refrigerator.

NRPPD ENTERTAINMENT

How well do you know Nebraska?....

1. Between 2 mountains - Valley
2. A pear - Bartlett
3. A top musical rating - Superior
4. A military academy - West Point
5. Speedy little town - Rushville
6. February 14th - Valentine
7. Old west justice - Lynch
8. Embarrassed strato-cunulus - Red Cloud
9. Military rank - Sargent
10. Flowering area - Bloomfield
11. Part of a book - Page
12. A face on Mt. Rushmore - Lincoln
13. Brand of watch - Elgin
14. Middle town - Central City
15. Dairy Cow - Golstein (Elsie)
16. Great Hawaii - Grand Island
17. Type of hound - Bassett
18. Fruit tree on a farm - Orchard
19. Hardy's comic sidekick - Laurel
20. Shaquille - O'Neil
21. Fighting River - Battle Creek
22. Brand of soup - Campbell
23. Buffalo Bill - Cody
24. 1492 Sailor - Columbus
25. J.R. - Ewing
26. An automobil-leg joint - Kearney
27. A very holy Ed - St. Edward
28. Sobbing rain - Weeping Water
29. Common Question following "No, you can't!" - Wynot
30. A brand of sporting goods equipment - Spalding
31. Damaged Indian weapons - Broken Bow
32. Name of Green Acres pig - Arnold
33. A color of blue - Royal.
34. Napoleon met his - Waterloo
35. Jungle animals - Lyon
36. Crystal h2O - Clear Water
37. Home of Johnny Carson - Norfolk
38. Has his own little world - Wayne
39. No frills look - Plainview
40. 100% silver - Sterling
41. Brand of Overalls - Oshkosh
42. Evade - Dodge
43. Tree cutter intersection - Beaver Crossing
44. Town in the middle - Center
45. Small ape - Gibbon
46. Sofa - Davenport
47. Green stone - Emerald
48. Recently built pace - Newcastle
49. Home of Iowa State - Ames
50. Attemptin - Tyron
51. A penmanship method - Palmer
52. Young female horse - Filley
53. A union between nations - Alliance
54. Red hair - Auburn

October Special Days....

Six October Fast Facts:

- October is the month when the five-day workweek was first sanctioned. The U.S. Naval Academy opened its doors in Annapolis, Maryland in 1845 (and Navy Day is the holiday that celebrates it!) Several U.S. presidents were born in October, too.
- Hugh Jackman, Luciano Pavarotti, Sigourney Weaver, Julie Andrews, and John Keats all were born in October.
- Six US presidents were born in October, more than any other month: John Adams, Rutherford Hayes, Chester Arthur, Theodore Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower and Jimmy Carter.
- Fall (including October) is a good time to be born if you want to live a long life. More centenarians are born in the fall months.
- The World Series of baseball begins in October.

October Birthstone: Opal and tourmalien are the two birthstones for October. Both of these gemstones are known for their endless color combinations.

October's Birth Flower: Marigolds and Cosmos both represent October babies. Marigolds bloom all summer and fall long, but in tht all i where they shine, accenting the harvest season. They symbolize positive emotion and energy. Cosmos delicate blooms represent order and harmony.

Office Hours:
7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Monday- Thursday
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for the local Hay
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times.

We have an
answering service
that answers these
numbers on a 24-
hour basis - after
hours, Saturday,
Sundays and holi-
days. Please state
legal description,
account number or
meter number
where the outage is
and your phone
number when you
call.

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Public Power District

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