

During his 99-county tour — Ag Secretary Mike Naig gets taste of sweetness at local stop

By Jan Reiste Pedley

Staff at Boernsen Bees Honey House in Ocheyedan were buzzing when Iowa Agriculture Secretary Mike Naig made a visit to the local facility last Tuesday. He was on his annual 99-county tour throughout Iowa and made local visits to Boernsens, Solsma's Punkin Patch & Fireworks between Sanborn and Sheldon, plus Cherokee and Sioux County stops.

Naig was also promoting the Choose Iowa program, whose vision is to connect consumers to Iowa produce and food products and expand markets for the state's farmers.

"With Choose Iowa, we are establishing an easily recognizable brand that can be used by farmers, producers, processors, farmers markets, grocery stores, restaurants and many others in the supply chain to connect directly with consumers," said Naig. "Choose Iowa combines the prestige of Iowa's global agricultural reputation with the entrepreneurial ingenuity that exists in all 99 counties."

Boernsen Bees started 21 years ago when Marlene and husband Larry Boernsen decided they wanted to implement honey into their family's diet as a healthier option for their five children.

Larry had been working for a gentleman from Fostoria who had bees. Boernsen Bees Honey was soon founded and the business has been buzzing forward ever since.

Marlene, daughters-in-law Mara Boernsen and Jill Boernsen, and parttime worker Brian Jack, showed Naig and District 3 Senator Lynn Evans the honey process.

Marlene explained the different flowers (and this-



Ag Secretary Mike Naig discusses bee production with Marlene Boernsen, owner of Boernsen Bees Honey House in Ocheyedan.

ties) that make for different honey flavors. She noted that bees especially favor white, purple and yellow blossoms.

Her business began with two colonies that brought 100 pounds of honey to the Clay County Fair that first fall. Now Boernsen Bees monitors 400 hive locations within a 50-mile radius of Ocheyedan.

The beekeeper noted this year's honey crop is lower due to the constant rains at the first part of the season.

Marlene has gradually acquired more equipment over the years and expanded her production space on her property just a block east of Main Street.

Products currently offered by the Honey House include flavored soda, lotions, lip balm, honey sticks, Christmas ornaments, candles, creamed honey flavors and much more.

A recent venture for Marlene has been Boernsen's Bee & Bee which is located just a block south of the



Naig takes a bite of honey comb during his visit to Boernsen Bees last Tuesday.

Honey House. A honey bee decor is found throughout the vacation rental home.

More photos can be found on this week's back page.



Gathering for a photo at Boernsen Bees Honey House in Ocheyedan are left to right: Ag Secretary Mike Naig, Mara Boernsen holding son Bremer, Marlene Boernsen, Jill Boernsen holding daughter Ivy, Brian Jack and District 3 Sen. Lynn Evans. (Photos by Arlyn Pedley).



Tracy House Tidbits



At about the time when most people begin to consider retirement, there was a need for help at the McGranahan Nursing Home in Ocheyedan, Iowa. Dad and Mom had been visiting the Home every Sunday to bring a short church service. So when Mrs. McGranahan asked for help, Mom was hired at nearly \$1.00 an hour. In 1959, that was real money, and for the first time, there was a financial reward for the cooking and cleaning and caring. A few weeks later, Mrs. McGranahan died unexpectedly, and her family asked Mom and Dad to buy the Home. It was purchased and became the Sikma Rest Home and Jeanette had a new career at age 59. Harry and Jeanette moved into town and lived in the Rest Home, but Dad continued to farm

Excerpt from Mrs. Jeanette Sikma 100th Birthday Celebration Booklet

As summer is quickly winding down our summer season is coming to an end. We will continue to be open to the public for tours and local research Tuesday mornings from 8 am – 11 am or by special appointment. We hope you have a chance to stop by for a visit.

August 8, 1968-Ocheyedan Press

Ocheyedan Community school will open Monday August 26th. Some of the faculty include Supt. Paul Grumley; Cornelius Smit, H. S. Principal; Dorothy Burgeson, English; David Carlson, Science; Max Cousins, Coach and Phys Ed; and Ken Eben, English.

August 2, 1961-Ocheyedan Press

Schuster Station Ad: No one will ever have a chance to steal the clock in our station, because the boys are always watching it.

August 9, 1962-Ocheyedan Press

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Sikma have taken over the McGranahan rest home in Ocheyedan.

Filing deadline Sept. 18 for Nov. 4 election

The regular city/school election will be November 4. The filing deadline for candidates to turn in papers is September 18, 2025.

Candidates need to file papers to be on the city/school ballots with the appropriate designated filing office (at the school or city clerks). No papers will be filed at the county auditor's office.

Courthouse closing

The courthouse will be closed from 8-10 a.m., Wednesday, September 17 for active trainer shooting.

Blood Drive in Ocheyedan Sept. 11

The Red Cross Blood Drive is planned for Thursday, September 11 at the Ocheyedan Christian Reformed Church from 12:00 - 6:00 p.m.

This drive is open for appointments online or through donor app. Appointments also can be made by texting LaDonna 712-330-9679.

Melvin 125th meeting Sept. 10

The Melvin 125th Committee will meeting Wednesday, September 10 at 7 p.m., in the Civic Center. Those involved are asked to bring progress reports and any suggestions, etc.

Special PPEL vote is Tuesday for S-O

A special election for other Sheldon and Sibley-Ocheyedan Community School Districts is planned for Tuesday, September 9 with polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

S-O patrons will vote on the following Public Measure QP to be adopted. It is asking for the authorization for a period of 10 years to levy and impose a voter approved physical plant and equipment tax not to exceed \$1.34 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation of taxable property within the school district.

A legal notice ran in last week's paper. A letter to the editor from Sup't. Stan De Zeeuw is published on page three which gives details.



Ten vying for S-O King/Queen honors

Ten seniors are in the running for Sibley-Ocheyedan Homecoming King and Queen when the coronation takes place Wednesday, September 17 at 6:30 p.m., in the high school gym. Front row left to right: Sakura Alanis, Becca Woelber, Hadley Crichton, Jackie Ochoa and Grace Sayler. Back row left to right: Kyler Elser, Ben

Byers, Gavin Stanton, Tate Marco and Dominic Marco.

A full week of festivities are planned September 15-19 which culminates with a parade and Homecoming football game Friday, September 19. A complete schedule of events will be printed in next week's issue. (Submitted photo).