By Sheri Hink
The Wauneta Breeze

In Wauneta, a large part of 2012 was spent on a quest to save the nursing home after Vetter Health Services announced it would be selling or closing the home, which it had operated in Wauneta for 29 years, as of July 1, 2012.

After the announcement the Wauneta Village Board and members of the community and surrounding communities banded together on a quest to save the nursing home.

Within a few short months the Village conducted feasibility studies and considered the practicalities of having a village-owned nursing home.

When the Village Board determined the project seemed possible, a campaign to raise funds to finance a portion of the funds needed to purchase and operate the nursing home initially was launched.

Funding to save the nursing home came from three sources. First, the Village of Wauneta pledged $150,000 of its funds towards the project. Second, the Village undertook $500,000 in revenue bonds. The third, and most pivotal portion of the funding came from private donations totaling $242,525. These funds were used for the purchase and initial operation of the nursing home after it was acquired by the Village of Wauneta.

A celebration of success

The future of the nursing home was assured, in large part, thanks to the generosity of the many who gave generously to the campaign to save the Wauneta nursing home.

To celebrate all that has been accomplished, employees and residents of Sunrise Heights of Wauneta have invited the entire community and members of the surrounding communities to come celebrate the feats that made it possible for the Village of Wauneta to purchase and reopen the nursing home as Sunrise Heights of Wauneta on July 1, 2012.

Activities for everyone

The Sunrise Heights Grand Re-Opening Celebration will take place this Saturday, Sept. 29 at the nursing home (427 W. Legion Street in Wauneta) starting at 4:00 p.m. MT.

The celebration event will take place in the courtyard gazebo area behind the facility. Those attending the celebration can enter through the east gate in the front yard.

Many different activities are planned for the Grand Re-Opening Celebration.

Youth from Wauneta-Palisade schools will sing at the beginning of the event.

The celebration will also include statements from a nursing home staff member and a resident, a flag presentation by the American Legion Auxiliary, presentations by the Wauneta Chamber and a ribbon cutting ceremony.

The public is also welcome to take a tour of the nursing home. There will be activities and games for kids of all ages.

At 5:00 p.m. MT the live auction will begin. Funds raised through the live auction will be used to purchase a new soft-serve ice cream machine for the residents at the facility.

Over 20 items will be auctioned including a handmade quilt by Beryl Knotwell, a hand crocheted football afghan made by Cheryl Hamilton and two dolls made by Judy Doetker. Also up for auction is the Heritage of Wauneta quilt assembled by Orpha Jirik which features photos of past residents. The quilt has hung in the dinning room of the facility for the past several years Other items included on the auction are a Husker golf coat tree, a family season pass to the Wauneta swimming pool and gift certificates from area businesses.

The celebration will conclude with a free community meal of pulled beef and pork, baked beans, chips and desserts provided by the ladies at the area churches.

Sara Behrends, Liz Noler and Dawn Doetker will provide entertainment during the meal.

Because of limited seating at the event, all are encouraged to bring a lawn chair.