



By Jeff Headley

Keith County News

The Cattlemen's Ball has a new icon that, literally, can't be missed—a 2,000-pound set of steel spurs constructed by Ogallala High School graduate Shannon Hansen of Lincoln.

The steel spurs were set into place in front of Pinnacle Bank in Ogallala last week as a promotion for the annual Cattlemen's Ball, which will be held June 7-8 on the Hanging H Ranch near Sutherland.

This year's Cattlemen's Ball is being hosted by Ralph and Beverly Holzfaster of Paxton, and Neal Hansen of Sutherland.

The spurs are anticipated to remain on display in front of Pinnacle Bank for about a month. In the coming years, the new spurs will travel the state as part of the annual Cattlemen's Ball, which is a fundraiser for the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Eppley Cancer Center.

The sculptor is the son of the late Jim and Dee Hansen, former owners of Kingsley Lodge at Lake McConaughy. He received instruction at Peru State College, Western Nebraska Technical College at Sidney and Southeast Community College at Milford. He has taught for 14 years and is currently the welding program chairman for Southeast Community College at Milford.

The spurs are made out of carbon steel with a patina finish, Hansen said. The sculpture is about 18 feet long and weighs about 2,000 pounds. It took 45 days to complete the western-themed spurs.

Of his sculpture, Hansen simply said, "It is monumental."

"The scale is amazing. Ultimately, it will look small when it is placed out in a field, but it looks good in front of this bank."

Hansen said being asked to create the sculpture "was a tremendous opportunity" and having it set at Ogallala "is great."

While the spurs will probably remain as his most significant contribution to the Cattlemen's Ball, Hansen also has constructed an abstract horse, which is part of a live auction during this

summer's Cattlemen's Ball.

The new icon was sponsored by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska and former State Sen. and Big Springs resident Jack Mills, who serves on the Blue Cross and Blue Shield board of directors. Money for the sculpture was derived through the company's Board of Directors Contributions Program.

The Cattlemen's Ball was formed in 1997 by a small group of beef industry leaders who wanted to create an organization to promote beef as part of a healthy diet—and in the process, do some good by raising money for cancer research, according to the Cattlemen's Ball website at www.cattlemensball.com.