



The Bluebird

A Publication for the Alumni of Goessel High School

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CELEBRATING 100 YEARS 1926-2026

While attending Goessel High School, you learned to move forward. Now, we are asking you to come back.

Alumni and friends are invited to celebrate 100 years of education at Goessel High School throughout the weekend of October 16 and 17, 2026.

By attending the event you will help tell the story of Goessel High School and reflect on the heritage of education in this community. It will give you the opportunity to meet old friends, classmates, acquaintances and teachers, while reminiscing memorable experiences.

The alumni committee composed of Ilona Abrahams, Georgia Berning, Sandy Duerksen, Bryant Miller, Eileen Goerzen Schmidt, Josh Schmidt, Laura Unrau, and Bill Unruh are inviting you to attend this event.

The weekend will begin on Friday evening with a football game between the Goessel Bluebirds and the Cunningham Wildcats. A meal will be served by the alumni committee that evening. Half time activities will include recognition and accomplishments of alumni. The Goessel High School Pep Band under the direction of Evan Koch, will provide pep band selections from the past.

Saturday morning will kick off with a fundraiser breakfast sponsored by the Ag department and FFA under the leadership of David Graham. Since the early 1950's Vo-Ag has been an important part of the Goessel School system. Make plans to attend this breakfast and show your support for this department.

Opportunities for various activities exist throughout the day on Saturday. Time has been set aside for class reunions in the afternoon. More specific information about these events will be available in the winter newsletter.

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The alumni newsletter is
also posted on the
alumni page of the USD
411 website.

A Stormy Beginning

Education in Goessel had a stormy beginning. The Goessel Preparatory School was built through the efforts of Elder Peter Balzer, a member of Alexanderwohl church. He felt there was insufficient knowledge of the Holy Scriptures being taught and a place was needed where more emphasis could be placed on the Bible. His efforts came to fruition in the spring of 1906 when a site was purchased in Goessel and a building project was begun. But, before it was finished a tornado swept it away. Not deterred, Elder Balzer moved forward and a one room building was erected.

The Preparatory School served a need and individuals who were able to pay the tuition supported the school by sending their children. As the cost of the school increased and more individuals were unable to pay for the tuition cost, discussions turned towards exploring the possibilities of a rural high school.

The constituents of the Goessel School District have always been educationally minded. In 1926, with a minimum of friction, the Rural High School district was organized. Nine years later, school



administrators and community members began to realize that the education system had outgrown the buildings.

In February of 1935, petitions were passed around and enough signatures were secured to hold a bond election. After the polls closed at 6:00 p.m., a tense period of time followed. For some time the votes saw-sawed back and forth. The final count indicated a positive result of a majority of two to one.

Groundbreaking was held in early June. Heavy rains interrupted the building on numerous occasions. A new brick building was finally finished and dedicated on Thanksgiving Day, 1935. Classes met for the first time in the new building the first Monday after Thanksgiving.



Keeping in Touch

Goessel High School celebrated its 60th anniversary in 1986. Approximately 900 people attended the event. In 2016, the 90th anniversary was celebrated. Again there was a large crowd for the Saturday evening meal and program.

Planning for an event, such as this is somewhat of a guessing game. As you hear more about this event please spread the word. We have an alumni address list of 2515, but not all have email or P.O. box addresses or the addresses are not current. If you have classmates that you correspond with in any sort of way, do us a favor and make sure they know about this event. Even better, ask if you can share their address. Email addresses are preferred to cut down on postage and paper.

Also, we are inviting all former teachers and administration to this event. If you have stayed in contact with any of these people, we would love to have their contact information.

2,515 students have graduated from Goessel High School.

Did You Know

Goessel Rural High School opened in 1926 with 29 students.

The first basketball game in the 1935 building was on December 19, 1936.

GHS was accredited as a class A high school in 1941. At the time Goessel was the only class A school in the North Marion County League.

The first track was located north on State Street. It was a quarter mile track in a pasture where cows grazed. The school rented 10 acres for this purpose.

School began at 9:00 a.m. and ended at 4:00 p.m. with a one hour break for lunch.

Tennis was played on a dirt court as early as 1929.

A Goessel baseball team existed as early as 1926.

Horseshoes became a competitive sport in 1937 and was held in connection with track.

The first yearbook was printed in 1929 and was not printed again until the 1940-1941 year.

The first band was organized in 1936. Thirty-nine students were enrolled.

1953 was cited as an outstanding year for vocal. There were seventy-five members in the A-Cappella Choir.

On January 16, 1941, this notice appeared in the Bluebird school newspaper. "All league activities except music and basketball have been suspended for the rest of the year. This is done in effort to conserve fuel and tires for national defense."

New lockers were installed in 1941. Keys and locks were available for 25 cents. These lockers were replaced in the summer of 2012.

A BLAST FROM THE PAST!

