

By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

As a result of a Nebraska Supreme Court suspension, John Blake Edwards, former Keith County attorney, cannot practice law as of Sept. 13. He had most recently been serving as county attorney in Dundy County.

In August, the defendant was sentenced on a theft charge after being convicted of a Class III felony for theft discovered during the county's annual audit by the Nebraska State Auditor.

The theft charge in Keith County involved thousands of dollars in public funds under his control as a county official.

He ran a diversion program from January 2007 through December 2010 while he was the Keith County Attorney.

In January 2011 he was arrested on three counts of theft by unlawful taking following an investigation by the Nebraska State Patrol.

Edwards was found not guilty on June 22 on two of the charges and guilty on one charge regarding a check he had written in January 2009 for nearly \$3,700 to the Ogallala Trap Team, closing out an account for the Diversion Program.

Terms of his sentence include restitution, jail time of 90 days, 1,200 hours of community service, nine months of house arrest, three years of intensive supervised probation and psychological evaluation.

No date for restoration of the temporary suspension to practice law has been set.