

# July 16 is the cutoff date for application

The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) cutoff date for applications has been set for July 16. Although applications will be taken at any time, only those applications submitted by that date will be evaluated and ranked for funding for the Fiscal Year 2004 (FY-2004) program.

In Fiscal Year 2004, Grassland Reserve Program was funded at just over \$54 million nationwide. Kansas received an allocation of nearly \$2.6 million, an increase of more than 20 percent over last year.

"Healthy, productive grasslands are vital to Kansas' grazing operations," said Harold L. Klaege, state conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Salina. "Grassland Reserve Program not only offers ranchers and farmers a unique opportunity to protect and enhance those critical resources, but also offers them a way to help preserve the state's distinctive ecological heritage," he said.

Only in its second year of existence, Grassland Reserve Program is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property through easements (permanent or 30-year) and rental agreements (10-year, 15-year, 20-year, or 30-year). In Kansas, approximately \$1.8 million will be set aside for easements, while \$750,000 will be set aside for rental agreements. Priority will be given to easements and 20-year and 30-year rental agreements.

The program emphasizes the preservation of native and natural grasslands and shrublands, support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and the protection of grassland that is under multiple threats of conversion.

"I would encourage producers interested in preserving their grasslands to stop by a United States Department of Agriculture Service Center and visit with the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service or Farm Service Agency staffs to learn more about the program," Conservationist Klaege said.

Applications that were submitted for last year's program can also be considered for Fiscal Year 2004 funding. However, those applicants will need to contact their local United States Department of Agriculture Service Center and convey their continued interest in the program.

Conservationist Klaege said that since this is still a newly developed program, he offered the following questions and answers to help farmers and ranchers understand how Grassland Reserve Program works.

• What land is eligible for Grassland Reserve Program?

The overall emphasis for Fiscal Year-2004 enrollment is on preserving native and natural species. Eligible land includes grasslands; land that contains forbs; shrubland (including improved rangeland and pastureland); or land that is located in an area that historically has been dominated by grassland, forbs, or shrubland when these lands have the potential to serve as wildlife habitat of significant ecological value.

• Is there a limit on the number of acres a landowner may enroll in the program?

There is no maximum limit. However, offers for enrollment must contain at least 40 contiguous acres.

• Who may participate in the program?

Only landowners may submit applications for easements. Both landowners and operators may participate on rental agreements.

• How will my adjusted gross income affect my eligibility for Grassland Reserve Program?

The Adjusted Gross Income provision of the 2002 Farm Bill impacts eligibility for Grassland Reserve Program and several other 2002 Farm Bill programs. Individuals or entities that have an average Adjusted Gross Income exceeding \$2.5 million for the three tax years immediately preceding the year the contract is approved are not eligible to receive program benefits or payments. However, an exemption is provided in cases where 75 percent of the adjusted gross income is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations.

• What is the application process?

To participate, interested persons submit an application to their local Natural Resources Conservation Service or Farm Service Agency office in the local United States Department of Agriculture Service Center. Applications for the program are accepted at anytime.

• What are my enrollment options? Enrollment options are 30-year and permanent easements and 10-year, 15-year, 20-year, or 30-year rental agreements.

• Can I graze my grassland while enrolled in Grassland Reserve Program?

All enrollment options permit common grazing practices that maintain the viability of the grassland; haying, mowing, or harvesting for seed production, subject to certain restrictions during the nesting season, as determined by Natural Resource Conservation Service; and fire rehabilitation and the construction of fire breaks, fences, and watering facilities and practices that protect and restore the grasslands functions and values.

• Do I need a conservation plan?

All participants in Grassland Reserve Program will be required to implement a conservation plan approved by United States Department of Agriculture to preserve the viability of the grassland enrolled in the program.

• How is the contract or easement value determined?

The value of an easement is determined through a professional appraisal. The landowner is paid the fair market value of the land, less the grazing value of the land. For 30-year easements or an easement for the maximum duration allowed under State or Tribal law, a landowner receives 30 percent of the fair market value of the land, less the grazing value of the land.

For rental agreements, the participant receives not more than 75 percent of the grazing value in an annual payment for the length of the agreement. Grazing values will be determined based on local prevailing rental rates.

**For More Information**

If you need more information about Grassland Reserve Program, please contact your local United States Department of Agriculture Service Center on West Highway 36 in St. Francis; phone number 785-332-2341. Information also is available on the internet at: [www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov) and [www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/GRP/default1.htm](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/GRP/default1.htm).



**JULY BIRTHDAYS MAKE** for the perfect reason to gather in celebration. Meeting their friends at the Senior Center are Hulda Dorsch, Marlene Young, Mary Dorsch and Walter Roesener. Not present was Joan Hatch.

*Times staff photo by Casey McCormick*

## First West Nile Virus confirmed in state

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has confirmed the presence of West Nile Virus in a bird in Sedgwick County. This is the first confirmed West Nile Virus activity in 2004.

West Nile Virus is carried by birds and transmitted by mosquitoes that bite the infected birds, which then transmit it to horses and people.

"We know it (the virus) is in the state and will be here throughout the summer," said Susan Roelfs, county health nurse.

"Everyone responds to the virus in different ways. Some individuals become extremely ill with long-lasting side effects and in rare cases, the virus can lead to death."

Nurse Roelfs urges people to protect themselves by being prepared but not scared of the virus. The best way to protect themselves is by using an insect repellent containing DEET and reducing mosquito breeding grounds.

She also urges Cheyenne County people not to wait for the virus to be reported in the county before taking action.

"We must protect ourselves and our families every day by getting rid of mosquito breeding grounds and using insect repellents," she said, noting that pamphlets about the virus are available at the county health office, located on U.S. 36.

Gail Hansen, Acting State Epidemiologist for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment said that there have been no human cases reported to Kansas department this season.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment also reminds physicians to report West Nile Virus cases with neuro-invasive disease to the state.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment recommends the following to reduce the risk of West Nile Virus:

- Use insect repellent with DEET and wear protective clothing when practical.
- Remove standing water (where mosquitoes breed).
- Use larvicide in water that cannot be drained or removed.
- Change water frequently in bird baths, pet bowls and wading pools.
- Limit outdoor activities at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active

### Finding dead birds

Those finding dead birds such as crows, bluejays, magpies or birds of prey (hawks, owls, eagles) should report them to the state by calling 1-877-228-2287. Birds being tested must meet the following criteria for testing:

- Bird should not have been dead longer than 24 hours;
- Bird should be intact and should be placed in double plastic bag in freezer until submitted.

In 2003, 90 human West Nile Virus cases with neurological illness were confirmed through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Division of Health and Environment Laboratories. Of these 90 cases, seven deaths were confirmed cases.

## Announce engagement

Cristita Ligsay of Tacloban City, Philippines, daughter of Melecio and Celestina Ligsay of Catebato, Philippines, will marry Harold Tygart of St. Francis, son of Joy Anderegg of Bird City and Ken Tygart of Tucson, Ariz.

Cristita has a bachelor of science degree in secretarial administration from Mountain View College in Valencia City, Philippines. She works for the East Visayan Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists in Tacloban City.

Harold attended Union College in Lincoln, Neb. He is owner of Tygart & Sons Construction Company in St. Francis.



**Tygart-Ligsay**

## Following tip helps in control of mosquitoes

Most people like to sit outside in the evenings or like having cookouts but they don't like those pesky mosquitoes, especially now that they have the potential to carry the West Nile Virus?

The following tip was recently brought into *The Herald* office. It was shared at a recent gardening forum.

Put some water in a white dinner plate and add a couple drops of Lemon Fresh Joy dish deter-

gent. Set the dish on the porch, patio or other outdoor areas.

It is not known what attracts the mosquitos — the lemon smell, the white plate color or what, but mosquitoes flock to the plate and drop dead shortly after drinking the Lemon Fresh Joy mixture. They die usually within about 10 feet of the plate.... it works just great.

While this tip may seem trivial, it may help control mosquitoes around the home.

In addition, private labs confirmed 731 human West Nile Virus test results. Three additional deaths were attributed to the virus, but un-

confirmed through lab work. In 2002, 22 West Nile Virus human cases with neurological illness were confirmed and no deaths reported.

## Occasion

### Merklin reunion

All of the nine brothers and sisters attended the L.E. Merklin reunion at the park, south of McCook, Neb., on Saturday, July 3. This is the first time they were altogether since their dad's funeral in 1991. There was lots of picture taking, visiting and enjoying the bountiful meal.

There were around 100 in attendance as listed:

Nadine's family: Nadine Miller, Garold and Lora Miller and Albert Miller, all of Cambridge, Neb.; Bonita and Al Garcia, Alex Garcia, Steve and Sherry Gonzales, Stacey Gonzales and Stu Porter, all of McCook; Shelly Gonzales and Chad Graham of Bellevue, Neb.; Tim and Linda Miller Sr., Tim Miller Jr., Holly and Gavin and Chris Miller, all of Flagstaff, Ariz.; Troy and Mercedes Hauxwell of Bethune, Colo., and Kaley; Jerry Miller and Eric Pittman and Conner of Loveland, Colo.; Kristine Garcia, Hope and Courtney of Oberlin; Ron and Deanna Miller of Arapahoe, Neb.; Chet and Melanie Miler, Emily, Abby, Johnny, Jessica, Brooke and Brayden, all of Florida.

Leon's family: Leon and Darlene Merklin, Dennis Merklin and Heather, Bradley Merklin and Pat

Rose, all of St. Francis. Dale's family: Dale Merklin of Appache Junction, Ariz.; YoLonda McClard of Flagstaff, Ariz. Charles' family: Charles and Barb Merklin, Steven and Bailey Merklin, Stacey Hazuka and Conner and Alexandra, all of Bird City. Bill's family: Bill Merklin of Meade; Terry Barnes of Oklahoma.

Janice's family: Janice Dey of Lawrence, Carla Endacott and Matthew and Tracy Wilson, all of Lawrence. Gary's family: Gary and Peggy Merklin of Malvern, Iowa; Matthew and Lisa Merklin, Sierra, Caitlyn, Jacob and Matthew Jr., of Benkelman, Neb. Marlin's family: Marlin and Peggy Merklin of Liberal; Larry and Lori Bauerle of Hutchinson. Lenna's family: Fred and Lenna Studer and Kenny and Connie Grieve and Andrea and Randy Hilgers, all of Goodland; DeAnna Denny, Daniel, Joey and Aaron of North Platte, Neb.; LeAnna Peters of Olathe; Lainie Studer of Castle Rock, Colo. Cousins: Vance and Betty Lewis of McDonald; Carl and Gina Hunn, Cara, Holly and Jordyn and Jasper of St. Francis; Candie Merklin, Cammi and Savannah of Benkelman.

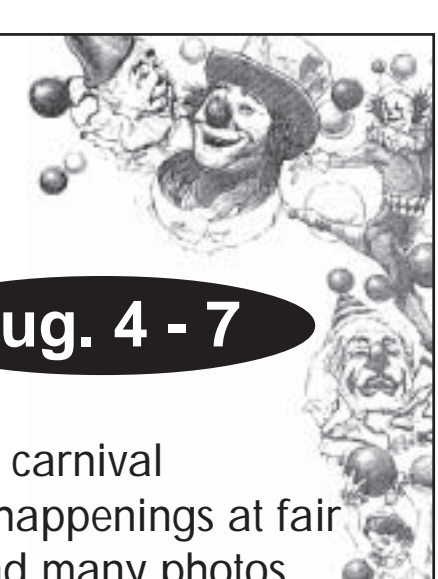
Coming Soon ...

# Cheyenne County Fair

New this year!!

Pre-fair section features 4-H's, fair and carnival activities, schedule of events and other interesting happenings at fair time. After-the-fair section features the results and many photos.

Aug. 4 - 7



Ralph Ostermeyer 2x6

51st Annual Tri-State Area Antique Engine & Thresher Show  
Tri-State Antique Auto Display, Swap Meet and Flea Market  
Bird City, Kansas  
**Coming in July**

**The Saint Francis Herald**  
P.O. Box 1050, St. Francis, KS 67756  
785-332-3162  
— and —  
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