



## Ambulance budget given at meeting

By Karen Krien

The ambulance budget for the year was presented to the county commissioners when they met Thursday.

Larry Gabel, emergency medical service director, reported that in 2004, the ambulance service had a budget of \$113,750 and \$113,052 was spent. "We were \$697 below budget," he said.

Through the year, the service took in \$140,315 which was deposited in the General Fund.

The commissioners had a question about three vouchers which had been turned in without an itemized bill. Kevin Berens, county attorney, had reminded the commissioners that, if the person turning in the bill could not verify the claim with a receipt, then the commissioners were not supposed to pay it. Commissioner Jane Brubaker said that if the commissioners go ahead and okay such a voucher, they could be charged with a misdemeanor.

Director Gabel explained that the one bill, which had "snacks and drinks" written on the voucher with no receipt, he later found out was for two quarts of oil for the ambulance and the technician had forgot to pick up the receipt. Janelle Bowers, bookkeeper and emergency medical technician, was at the commissioners' meeting and said she had been on that particular run and it was for oil.

The commissioners said that, without a receipt, the technicians would have to pay the bill even if it was for oil. Commissioner Tim Raile said he didn't think it was right that the technicians should have to pay for the oil but there was nothing he could do about it.

Director Gabel said that it was "catch 22" — that it was a matter of the law and trust of volunteers — that there comes a time when the commissioners should have "common sense." There was also a problem with a bill at Applebee's where the technicians had only the VISA receipt which was not itemized. Again, the commissioners opted not to pay the bill because of the legalities.

By that time, Director Gabel was angry and told the commissioners that he would not have the technicians, who volunteer their time, pay for their meal nor pay for oil for the ambulance.

"Just take it out of my salary," he said. After the director had left, the commissioners felt that, if the director or technicians had called, they could have gotten an itemized receipt from the credit card company. Terry Miller, clerk, said he had called before and received the itemized receipt.

On Monday, a special meeting was held to discuss health insurance and Commissioner Brubaker said she had called and gotten the itemized receipts for the two vouchers, which were several months old, and the vouchers were going to be paid.

According to the minutes, Commissioner Brubaker would take the receipts to Director Gabel, ask him to submit them again and they would be paid.

### Road and bridge report

Dave Flemming, road and bridge supervisor, presented a highway permit for Energy Alliance to trench across a county road. At that point, the supervisor asked if the commissioners were still considering charging the company and farmers (the county cannot charge phone companies) for crossing county roads with lines. He said that Yuma County charges \$500 for trenching across county roads.

The commissioners talked about a charge of \$50 for each permit. This minimal charge would cover drawing up the paperwork and checking on the work following the trenching/boring. However, in the end, no decision was made.

Supervisor Flemming listed three projects he would like to see on the county's 5-Year Plan. They included: 1) replace the Olofson Bridge north of St. Francis; 2) applying asphalt overlay on the South River Road; and 3) replace the Runzel Bridge west of St. Francis. The two bridge plans are partially funded (80-20 percent) by the Federal Government however,

the state controls the money. A county can have only two projects in one year. Last year (2004), the county had the health clinic and St. Francis city sewer projects.

Supervisor Flemming said to receive a grant for one of the bridges, it would be necessary to contact everybody in that area.

Supervisor Flemming asked to encumber \$4,275 to cover a bridge inspection and \$2,740 for a culvert.

The county has been trying out a "road groom" which is a grader pulled behind a pickup or tractor. After talking to another county supervisor, Supervisor Flemming said this groom, a 11.5 footer, was too big and a 10-foot grader would be better.

He said he thought he could purchase two used mowers for less than \$1,000, through the Federal Reserve and he had purchased two concrete vibrators from the state auction for around \$200.

The supervisor briefly went over what road and bridge work had been done in the county in 2004 and what was planned for 2005. Commissioner Raile said he thought a little more work needed to be done on the Neilan curve.

### Health insurance

The commissioners discussed the health insurance plan but didn't feel they had enough information to continue so, at a special meeting on Monday, they reviewed and approved the county's health insurance plan through Corporate.

The commissioners agreed to drop the \$200 deductible plan and give employees the choice of a \$500, \$1,000, \$1,500 or \$2,000 plan. Employees with family plans will have \$84.62 taken out of their checks for the \$500 deductible. Other amounts withheld are: \$35 for \$1,000 deductible; or nothing for \$1,500 and \$2,000. The county will pay \$700 per employee toward health insurance.

### Ambulance runs

Mrs. Bowers, ambulance bookkeeper said the county's four ambulances (two in St. Francis and two in Bird City) had made 241 runs in 2004. Of that, 205 runs were made by St. Francis technicians and 36 by Bird City technicians.

Since the CAT scanner had been installed in the Cheyenne County Hospital in mid-October, the number of runs to Goodland had dropped significantly. She said that before the CAT scanner had been installed, the technicians had made two to four runs a week to Goodland. In November and December, they had no runs to Goodland for CAT scans.

The director noted that, while there will be less runs for the ambulance, that keeping patients from having to travel to Goodland for the scans is much better for the patients. Also, less runs will mean the ambulances will last longer.

### In other business

In other business:

- The commissioners had received a letter from attorney Mike Day concerning a bill for a cleanup in Bird City which the commissioners felt they should not have to pay. After reading the letter, they stood firm in their decision, saying that it was not the county's responsibility to pay for the cleanup.

- Director Gabel reported there have been a mock ambulance run on Tuesday and the technicians and others involved had done well. Later, they had all met to discuss what they could and/or should do if this had been a real accident.

- The law enforcement agreement between Bird City and the county will be signed at the next meeting when the new officials take over.

- The commissioners signed resolutions 04-13, 04-14 and 04-15 which allowed the transfers of 25 percent of the Ambulance, Special Machinery and Fire Department funds into the Capital Outlay Fund.

### Next meeting

The next meeting of the commissioners will be held at 8 a.m. on Monday in the commissioners' room. At around 9 a.m., the newly elected county officials will be sworn in.



TROY GARDNER, CHEYENNE COUNTY Sheriff elect, addresses the Bird City City Council at Monday evening's meeting. The new sheriff will take over county wide law enforcement on Jan. 10. Times staff photo by Casey McCormick

## Newly elected sheriff talks to city about his plans for law enforcement

By Casey McCormick

Cheyenne County Sheriff elect, Troy Gardner, met with the Bird City City Council to discuss his plans for law enforcement in Bird City and county wide. Mr. Gardner is the chief of police for St. Francis and will take over the sheriff's department on Jan. 10.

"I'm excited about being sheriff," Chief Gardner said, "I think you'll be please with the service you get."

One of the first actions he plans to take is making one of his police officers his undersheriff. Mark Davidson, who lives in Bird City, is Chief Gardner's choice for the undersheriff position.

"Mark will be in charge and you can contact either one of us if you needed to," Chief Gardner said.

With the resignation of sheriff deputy, Jeff Moser, after the election,

Chief Gardner was left with no deputies. With the addition of Mark Davidson, Chief Gardner hopes to hire another officer who would have field training from Officer Davidson. If the new officer was working out, then it would be possible to send the individual to the police academy in May.

Chief Gardner noted two priorities; 1.) school zone coverage; and 2.) weekend night presence.

"Presence makes a lot of a difference," Chief Gardner said.

He also expressed his desire to work closely with the city council and citizens of Bird City. Chief Gardner hopes to have a council member to act in an advisory position in the future.

When Chief Gardner was questioned about what capacity sheriff's officer Carol Gamblin would maintain, he responded that she would re-

main in a clerical position.

The council also asked Chief Gardner about Bronson, the sheriff department's drug dog. The dog had been kept in Colby at a cost to the county of over \$100 a week. Arrangements were made to reassign Bronson to St. Francis Police Officer Tom Raile.

"When the dog was recently evaluated, the handler said he was a great dog," Chief Gardner said. "What happens next depends on the new deputy."

### In Other Business

In other business:

- Dan Byers of the Kansas Rural Water Association will be at the next council meeting to outline a plan to have the city water system globally mapped. This will help in the future to know where valves and lines are located.

- City employee Daryl Miller told the council that individuals have been abusing the recycling bin service in town. Toxic waste material have been left there and people are using the bins to unload trash.

- A cost-of-living increase of 2.7 percent was approved for the three city employees.

- City manager Sam Beeson told the council the four well heaters are inadequate and need to be replaced. The current heaters being used are failing due to condensation building up in the electrical hookups. The city will take bids on new heaters.

- Park and Recreation Committee chair, Wendy Richmeier, asked about the progress of placing signs and a camera at the city park. Depending on weather, the project should be completed soon.

## Stolen van found in neighboring state

By Casey McCormick

After nearly a month, the Frontier Equity van that was stolen in Bird City has been located in Denver.

On Monday the Cheyenne County Sheriff's Department received a phone call from the Denver Police telling them that the missing van was at their impound lot.

On the morning of Dec. 8, sheriff's officer Carol Gamblin noticed a 1998 Pontiac Sunfire was parked erratically along Park

Ave. in Bird City. After running a vehicle check and contacting the Phillip's County Sheriff's Department, it was learned that that vehicle had been stolen from Phillipsburg the previous evening.

At the same time, Frontier Equity contacted the Cheyenne County Sheriff's Department to report the missing courtesy van.

Sheriff Eddie Dankenbring will continue to investigate the case and will check the van for evidence once it returns to Kansas.

## Kettle collection raises less than last year

By Karen Krien

The Salvation Army kettles across Kansas came up short and Cheyenne County's kettles were no exception.

Dolores Jenik, Salvation Army coordinator for the county, reported that a little over half as much came in this year compared to last year.

"In 2003, the county's kettles collected around \$950 but this year, the total came to only \$450," she said.

Michael Dixon, director of the Kansas and Western Missouri Salvation Army Division, reported that the area was running about \$100,000 behind its goal of \$235,000.

The Salvation Army money raised goes to provide emergency crisis assistance such as helping with utilities, rent, prescriptions, food and clothing.

On top of less money, the Salvation Army officials are expecting increases in the number

of people needing services.

Mrs. Jenik said that around \$200 has already been spent out of the \$450 raised during the holiday season.

"We are afraid there are going to be people that we will not be able to help," she said.

Years ago, Salvation Army funds went to help transients coming through the county but, today, there are people in the communities who need and get assistance — very little goes to transients.

"We try to help according to the family size and needs," Mrs. Jenik said.

It's not too late to give. The kettles may not be out at community functions but donations are always welcome.

Checks and donations may be brought in to the county treasurer's office or mailed to the Salvation Army in care of Dolores Jenik, P.O. Box 462, St. Francis, KS 67756.



SYLVIA HUBBARD assists Kori Underwood during a mock disaster simulation held last Tuesday between Rawlins and Cheyenne counties emergency medical technicians. See Page 6 for more information and pictures.

Times staff photo by Karen Krien

## Recycling containers are being misused

People have been abusing the recycling service in Bird City. At the Bird City Council Meeting a city employee reported that toxic waste materials have been left at the location and individuals have been dropping off their trash there.

This service is meant to provide for a way to help the environment, but if it continues to be abused it could be lost. Please use the recycling bins responsibly.

