

State says more money needed for public school education

By Karen Krien

It's been a long time coming but the Kansas Supreme Court ruled on Monday that the Legislature hasn't spent enough money to provide an adequate public education to all of the state's children.

Carl Werner, St. Francis Schools Superintendent, said that the decision will probably be good for the St. Francis Schools and other Kansas schools because the Legislature has not increased the budget per pupil for four years. However, the new funding formula which the

Legislature comes up with will need to be closely examined to be sure that factors that benefit small schools, especially the low-enrollment factor, are not substantially reduced or eliminated. He also cautioned that declining enrollment, which many schools are facing, still remains a problem.

Cheylin Superintendent David Zumbahlen said he was glad to see some action being taken

"Maybe it will get us off of where we have been with no additional funding. However, the Legislators

will have their work cut out for them because some campaigned on not raising taxes," he said.

"It's going to be an interesting Legislative session."

There were seven members of the court which upheld part of a lower court judge's decision in 2003 that the state wasn't providing enough money but did not agree with the judge's finding that the current funding formula was unconstitutional.

The Legislature has until April 12 to come up with more funding and a plan. In a 2002 study by Augenblick and Myers, a private consulting firm in Denver, indicated that the state needed to provide an additional \$512 per student. Kansas schools now receive \$3,863 per student. There is also a low-enrollment "weighting factor" which is figured in and gives the smaller schools additional funding.

The Dodge City and Salina school district argue that the present formula allows some districts to benefit more than others and that is why it is a violation to the constitutional provision requiring the state to provide all students with an adequate education opportunity.

The 2002 study recommended that the state spend an additional \$229 million.

Superintendent Werner pointed out that the schools have not received additional money in state aid in the last three years.

The state Supreme Court warned lawmakers that they had better act this session and come up with a solution by April 12. The Legislators could be looking at raising taxes (which most Kansans are against), cutting programs or consolidating small schools. If Legislators do not come up with a solution, the court will take action to carry out the responsibility.

Coyote contest to bring in teams

By Karen Krien

Coyote callers will be coming into St. Francis throughout the week to catch the start of the ninth annual Midwest Coyote Calling Contest which will be held this weekend.

Brent Rueb, coordinator, expects 75 to 100 two-man teams from Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wisconsin, Illinois and New Mexico, along with Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado to attend the contest.

"We have become probably the largest, most popular coyote calling contest in America," Mr. Rueb said.

He said at least one, perhaps two, film crews will be in St. Francis to document the event for Outdoor channel, and other television shows and DVD releases.

The location of the start and other activities of the contest has changed from Riverside Recreation to the newly remodeled exhibit building at the fairgrounds (north side of St. Francis).

"The new location will offer a larger facility for the growing number of hunters," Mr. Rueb said.

Last year, hunters reported seeing 396 coyotes and 163 were killed. The team of Schmid and Schmid of Colorado Springs brought in the most coyotes (11) and also had the largest coyote weighing 37 pounds.

Two men make up a team and there are two divisions: the Midwest division (experienced) and the

Sportsman division (novice hunters).

Anyone interested in entering the contest should contact Mr. Rueb at Tri-State Lumber, 785-332-2731 or at his home, 785-332-3402.

New contest

New this year will be the Predator Caller of the Year contest. Ten hunters will perform their calls and show their coyote calling ability. Their peers (other contestants) do not know who is doing the calls and will vote. The best caller will be crowned "Predator Caller of the Year."

"This will be an interesting part of the contest," Mr. Rueb said.

Bob Juleson, Goodland, has donated a mounted coyote bust as the prize.

People are urged to stop by the fairgrounds and see the activities as the callers return with the coyotes. During the weekend, the St. Francis Community High School junior class will be serving the meals for the hunters as a fund raiser.

Supporters

National supporters for the event are Foxpro and Sportsmen's Warehouse. There are also a number of other local and area sponsors including Bankwest, First National Bank, Cheyenne County Wildlife, Predator Sniper Styx, Topside Office Supply and Carlson Choke Tubes.

"It is with the help of our sponsors that has helped make this calling what it is!" Mr. Rueb said.

First baby of 2005 will receive gifts

By Karen Krien

As of Tuesday, there had not been a report of a baby born to Cheyenne County parents. Since the article came out in last week's newspapers, there have been rumors that there is a baby or two expected within the next month.

The "First Baby of the Year 2005" contest began Saturday. It will end when the first phone call comes in and the baby/parents meet the rules of the contest.

One of the rules or requirement is that the baby be born to parents living in Cheyenne County for one month or more. These parents and

their new born infant will be awarded gifts from sponsors.

The rules are simple:

- As stated, the parents must have lived in Cheyenne County for at least one month.

- The Saint Francis Herald office must be notified as soon as possible following the birth. The Herald's number is 785-332-3162.

The parents of this year's first baby winner will receive a car wash from the St. Francis Equity, a \$50 gift certificate from St. Francis Super's, \$50 bond from Bankwest, a \$50 bond from First National Bank, a baby photo album from

Schultz's, a baby gift from Owens True Value, a baby basket from Krien Pharmacy, two bottles of champagne from Burr Liquor, a spinal adjustment for Mommy and baby plus a tube of Biofreeze from Poling Chiropractic and Family Health Center, and a year's subscription to The Saint Francis Herald or Bird City Times.

The parents of the new baby should pick up their gifts or claim their services within 60 days after the birth.

Since most babies are not on schedule, it's hard telling when the first baby of 2005 will be born.

2004 First Baby of the Year

The 2004 First Baby of the Year was McKenna Marie Poling. She was born on Jan. 21 to Dr. Brett and Cynthia Poling of St. Francis. McKenna weighed in at 8 pounds, 1 ounce and was 21-inches long. McKenna has three brothers, Foster, Tiernan and Tyson.

Today, McKenna is an active little girl weighing about 24 pounds.

"Being parents of the first baby of the year was great!" said Mrs. Poling. "We really appreciated all the gifts we received."

Ten free flowering trees for joining foundation

Ten free flowering trees will be given to each person who joins The National Arbor Day Foundation during January 2005.

The free trees are part of the non-profit Foundation's Trees for America Campaign.

The 10 trees are two White Flowering Dogwoods, two Flowering Crabapples, two Washington Hawthorns, two American Redbuds and two Goldenrain trees.

"These compact trees were selected for planting in large or small spaces," John Rosenow, the Foundation's president, said. "They will give your home the beauty of lovely pink, white and yellow flowers...and also provide winter berries and nesting sites for songbirds."

The trees will be shipped postpaid at the right time for planting between Feb. 1 and May 31 with enclosed planting instructions. The six to 12 inch trees are guaranteed to grow or they will be replaced free of charge.

Members also receive a subscription to the Foundation's bimonthly publication, Arbor Day, and The Tree Book with information about tree

planting and care.

To become a member of the Foundation and to receive the free trees send a \$10 contribution to Ten Free Flowering Trees, National Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, NE 68410, by Jan. 31. Or go online to arborday.org.



County heating assistance forms need to be in by Jan. 31

By Karen Krien

The Cheyenne County Energy Assistance Program sponsored by Priority Oil and Gas and Peace Lutheran Church has been formed to help people to pay their heat bills but there is a deadline of Jan. 31 for applications to be returned.

This energy assistance program has been designed for needy people living only in Cheyenne County. It is similar to the Low-income Energy Assistance Program and, even people qualifying and receiving help in this program are still eligible to get help in the Cheyenne County Energy Assistance Program.

Applications are available through Priority Oil and Gas, at the county sheriff's and treasurer's offices at the courthouse, at the city offices in both St. Francis and Bird City or call Peace Lutheran Church.

Applicants must meet certain guidelines including

One family member - with a monthly income of \$1,440 or less; two members - \$1,930 or less; three members - \$2,420 or less; four members - \$2,910 or less; five members - \$3,400 or less; six members - \$3,890 or less; seven - \$4,380 or less; eight members - \$4,870 or less.

Once the amount of assistance is established for eligible applicants, a check will be submitted to the energy provider for the applicants account. The eligible applicant will be notified by mail of the amount of subsidy being paid to their account.

"Helping residents with their heating bills is a way for the company can give back to the community," Robbie Gries, president and owner of Priority Oil and Gas, said. "The assistance is not designed to pay the whole bill but assistance will be given on the varied bases of need."

South of McDonald News By Sandy Binning

New Year's Day dinner and afternoon guests of Dan and Margie Hubbard were Dave and Sylvia Hubbard and family, George and Dixie Louderbaugh and family, Gilbert and Jan Antholz, Craig and Jerri Antholz and family, Phil and Jane Graves and family of Kansas City, Kurt and Kathy Russell of Goodland, Leon and Mary Volk and family of Goodland and Mark and Lisa Martin and family of Sterling, Colo.

Mark and Marilee Gundlach and Seth, Mark and Dawn Officer and children, and Randy and Melissa Regier and children all returned home Sunday after spend-

ing the holidays visiting Lynn and Rita Officer.

John and Linda Allacher were Friday evening guests of Lynn and Rita Officer and family.

The Officer family all attended the New Year's Eve party Friday at the Federated Church.

Eunice Officer and Ratha Lea Loker were frequent guests at the Lynn Officer home this past week.

Jim Montgomery of Little Rock, Ark., was a house guest this past week of Lindon and Diane Montgomery.

George and Kathy Banister, Jamie and Debbie, all visited Arlene Dickman in Quinter Tuesday.

George and Kathy Banister, David and Debbie, took Jamie to the Denver airport Wednesday morning.


Amelia Banister and Karlyne Atchison were New year's Day dinner and afternoon guests of George and Katny Banister and family. Additional guests were Alex Hengen, Brandon Gordon and Lincoln Pochop.

Bethel Goltl attended the fundraiser for Elizabeth Benda's trip to Europe Thursday evening at the Jayhawk Theater in Atwood Thursday evening.

Wednesday guests of Lavern and Bethel Goltl were Marty Goltl, Sophia and Jack.

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