



**A WEARY TRAVELER.** This unidentified woman was one of the stranded visitors who sought refuge at the United Methodist Church.  
*Photo courtesy of DeAnza Church*



**EVERYONE'S WELCOME!** An unidentified woman and her dog were able to get some rest.  
*Photo courtesy of DeAnza Church*



**THE FIRST SNOW** of the year was one to remember. Blizzard conditions made driving close to impossible.  
*Photo courtesy of DeAnza Church*

## Blizzard surprises holiday travelers



*By Casey McCormick*

Many travelers were caught unaware by a swift and fierce storm on Sunday. People trying to get home from Thanksgiving visits found themselves held over in Bird City waiting for highways to reopen.

Without a motel in town, most of the visitors stayed at the United Methodist Church. Others were housed at the school and American Legion Hall. Those stranded were 40 at the church, 15 at the school and four at the Legion Hall.

The four at the Legion Hall were in town for a tool sale on Sunday.

Bird City kitchens provided hot

meals and the travelers had many comforts as the wait continued. The Heritage Corner Cafe kept its doors open, serving chili and chicken noodle soup at no charge.

On Tuesday morning I-70 opened first followed by U.S. 36 at 10:45 a.m.

One couple was headed to Imperial, Neb., and encountered the storm near Idalia, Colo. They were able to drive about 60 more miles to Bird City. When they entered the town no lights were on.

But they knew if they could find a church they would be okay. They soon found the Methodist Church with quite a few cars with out-of-

state tags.

They said that people from town brought so much food to the church that no one had to worry at all about being hungry.

The blizzard stranded many travelers in the area. The high school in St. Francis housed about 200 people, along with 25 to 30 dogs. The Sherman County Armory, Max Jones Field House and another Methodist Church in Goodland were also filled.

Both the stranded visitors and locals endured some power outages. For about three hours on Sunday Bird City was without power and also on Monday for about an hour.



**NOT ALL BAD!** This girl and boy played games while their family waited out the storm.  
*Photo courtesy of DeAnza Church*

## Physical therapy projects proceeding

*By Karen Krien*

It is about time for the latest building improvement at the hospital to begin and members of the Cheyenne County Hospital Board looked at last drawings and the architect's invoice which were approved.

There are two projects being planned at the hospital: 1) the ambulance entrance remodeling; and 2) the physical therapy remodeling in the basement of the hospital. The physical therapy project will be completed first and the board was told that the architect had suggested there be a single-bidding process.

The architect had visited with the contractors and bids will be open on Dec. 13 at 11 a.m. in the clinic. Contractors can come into the facility and look on Dec. 1.

Board members were concerned that certain contractors who had done previous building at the hospital would have the low bid. They were still waiting on one contractor to complete some of the projects done on the hospital's remodeling project.

Administrator Les Lacy said there is a concern about taking the lowest bid when there is grant money involved. However, the board is held to taking the lowest "qualified" bid and, if it does not meet their qualifications, they must be able to state why before the bid can be disqualified.

This matter will be dealt with when the bids are opened on Dec. 13.

The board talked about contractor's concerns about bids on the ambulance entrance which will not be built until warmer weather. However, with the economy and its jumps in prices, bidding is complicated for the contractors.

The ambulance entrance remodeling project will be completed with Kansas State Tax Credit money. The administrator announced that there is \$155,000 in cash and commitments toward filling the \$180,000 needed and felt there would be no problem in filling the last \$25,000.

Administrator Lacy said they will be looking at purchasing a new generator for the hospital. Since it will be larger, the equipment will be placed on the outside of the building near the ambulance entrance. The administrator thought there would be enough money in the Capital Equipment Fund to purchase the generator.

### Flu vaccine

Flu vaccine had not come to Cheyenne County as planned. Administrator Lacy said the vaccine had now arrived. Later pricing had

been very high but 550 doses had been purchased at a reasonable price. The administrator said he had filed a complaint with the Attorney General's office concerning possible price gouging.

When asked, he said that people should go ahead and get their flu shots. Even if they do get the flu, the vaccine should lessen the severity.

In mid December, more flu vaccine may become available if needed.

### Lease agreement

Jackie John, area director for Great Plains Health Alliance, presented the lease agreement between board of trustees of the hospital and the Great Plains Health Alliance. The agreement would pay the Alliance \$55,808 for the next five years.

Chairman Rueben Schultz and board member Swede Calnon asked that, with the economy like it is, if the percent of the raise, 4 percent, could be negotiated.

Mrs. John said that with the price of gas and some of the other costs, it was almost impossible but she would take the question back for consideration.

She pointed out that, by being with Great Plains, the hospital benefits in many ways including getting pharmaceutical products at a reduced price, representation in legal

matters, the Alliance taking responsibility for operations and many other benefits.

Mrs. John said that she will put together a list showing the benefits of belonging to the Great Plains Health Alliance organization and will present it at the next meeting. The board agreed to go ahead with the lease agreement.

### Electronic Medical Records

The Electronic Medical Records in the clinic is proceeding fairly smooth. The system is expected to be fully operational by early March. Administrator Lacy said Nadja Button, PA-C, has been overseeing this project.

### Contract with new doctor

Administrator Lacy reported he is working out the details on a contract with Dr. Rebecca Allard. Dr. Allard will begin working at the hospital and clinics in the summer of 2007. She will also be providing some locum tenens coverage on a monthly basis until she is able to come to work full time.

### Next meeting

The next meeting of the hospital board has been changed from the third Thursday to 3 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 16, in the basement meeting room of the clinic in St. Francis.

## Salvation Army campaign to begin

The year 2005 was busy for the Salvation Army as the hurricanes hit in the south. However, when the blizzard hit in St. Francis on Sunday, the people were able to see the Salvation Army in action as through state disaster level funding, Salvation Army paid for all the food used at the shelter set up at the high school.

"The state disaster fund let us provide in this emergency but we did not have to use our local funds which will be used for local emergencies," said Dolores Jenik, Salvation Army chairman for Cheyenne County.

The bells have again started ringing across the nation as Salvation Army kettles have been set up to collect donations to help people in need both at home and away. The kettles will be set up in Cheyenne County at two more events and residents are asked to give as much as they are able.

The Salvation Army kettle will be at the Yuletide Festival and Sweet Shoppe which will be held at the St. Francis Commu-

nity High School on Sunday. Mrs. Jenik said the kettle will be there before the program starts at 2 p.m.

On Dec. 15, the kettle will be at the Chamber and Christmas On Us festivities which will take place on St. Francis' Main Street beginning at 4 p.m.

### Donation envelopes

Look for the Salvation Army donation envelopes inserted in both *The Saint Francis Herald* and *Bird City Times* this week.

"Please watch for them and those not able to come to the activities can place a donation in the envelope and drop it in the mail," said Mrs. Jenik.

There will also be extra envelopes placed at various locations throughout the two communities.

"If you miss them and still want to give, donations can be sent to Salvation Army, PO Box 462, St. Francis, KS 67756, or can be brought to me at the county treasurer's office in the courthouse."