



ENJOYING THE FOOD — (l to r) Darwin and Beverly Higgins visit with Bethel Goltl, at the dinner on Sunday.

## Benefit held for medical expense

A benefit dinner for Barbara Krantz, wife of Don Krantz of McDonald was held on Sunday. The McDonald Lions Club and the Lutheran Church members teamed up to raise funds for her medical expenses. They held a pork chop potluck dinner in McDonald at the American Legion Hall. Thrivent Association offered to match funds raised. Mrs. Krantz who is uninsured, was diagnosed with a tumor on her brain stem that requires surgery. Being a member of a small community really shows how much people around you care about their fellow residents.



MANNING THE grill were Mark Roesener and Rod Young. Times staff photos by Casey McCormick

## Electronic record system is ready

For weeks, people have been hearing and reading about the new electronic medical records system which is being implemented at the Cheyenne County Hospital and Clinic. This will actually be two systems and the clinic's system is up and ready to go. Patients visiting the clinic will see providers carrying a tablet computer in addition to the folder containing their records for a time during transition. The clinic staff has been busy putting patient information into the system for ready access and to make the early portion of our "go-live" more efficient. Some of the advantages of the new system are improved safety (better information on allergies and drug interactions), access to records, computerized prescriptions and communication of orders, reduced transcription costs, and improved billing efficiency. The Cheyenne County Hospital staff is one of the first in the area

to be using this cutting-edge technology. "Even though there are financial and performance benefits to the EMR, this change is about putting patient safety and quality care first," said Les Lacy, hospital administrator. He noted that the hospital and the clinic will have separate bills now. Administrator Lacy said that some people will like this change and that he hopes those who don't will understand the need to move forward and appreciate the improvement in care delivery. The Electronic Medical Record for the hospital is currently being installed and will "go-live" at department levels instead of facility wide. Administrator Lacy indicated that implementing the hospital system was significantly more complicated than the clinic system due to the variety of departments and issues involved.



NADJA BUTTON enters information electronically for Les Lacy. Times staff photo by Karen Krien

## Hospital to be tobacco-free

By Karen Krien

By the end of March, the hospital and clinic campus will become tobacco-free.

Administrator Les Lacy said after that point, staff will not be able to use tobacco products while they are clocked in or on hospital property. He pointed out that while the tobacco ban was enforceable for employees, the hospital would have to rely on tobacco user's courtesy for nonemployees until the legislature makes smoking on hospital grounds illegal. He indicated that employees off the clock would be able to smoke in their cars. Kansas law currently prohibits smoking inside the hospital.

He talked about placing containers for cigarette/cigar butts at the corners of the hospital property. He said that after the hospital addition was completed, the staff had cleaned up the property and there were numerous cigarette butts and he thought it was better to provide a container than to have people discard them on the lawn.

### Remodeling and equipment

The remodeling of the physical therapy room in the basement of the hospital and the emergency entrance at the rear is supposed to begin on March 6. This date will mark the beginning of the 180-day count to the end of the project.

In the meantime, the handicap ramp at the front of the hospital has developed some rough spots which could be a tripping hazard. The hospital administrator said that Bill Wilger, hospital maintenance, has painted boards with a paint/sand mixture and, as soon as the weather warms up a little, he will glue the boards on.

The board wondered if it wouldn't be easier to replace the ramp but Administrator Lacy said that the front entrance would become the emergency entrance when the remodeling is started in the rear. There just would not be enough time.

Administrator Lacy will get some estimates of costs for running a new ramp. The board discussed that, until the emergency entrance is finished, there could be considerable use of the entire front entrance. They agreed that the ramp should have a temporary fix now and a permanent repair later.

The administrator reported that several pieces of equipment are not working right. He said the whirlpool tub across from the nurse's station is one. While it is safe and can be used, it will cost \$1,500 in parts (for the board that controls the tub fill and empty cycle) plus the cost of labor to fix. The administrator said that although new tubs run around \$10,000, he felt it might be better to consider replacement as the current tub is 10 years old, has had several issues recently, and is currently out of production. Jackie John, area director for Great Plains Health Alliance, the company which leases the hospital, said one of the other hospitals affili-

ated with Great Plains was looking into to purchasing two tubs and, if three were purchased, the hospital might get it cheaper.

Administrator Lacy said the coagulation machine in the lab needed to be replaced. He said that he did not have a price at the meeting. He said he expected it to be around \$17,000 and would be purchased out of Funded Depreciation.

The anesthesia machine had its "mother-board" go out during a preventive maintenance inspection. The machine has been replaced for now with a serviceable used anesthesia machine at a cost of \$1,000. The administrator is looking for permanent solution for replacing the machine. The old machine cost \$30,000 new over 10 years ago.

The Electronic Medical Record system continues to be implemented into the hospital. The Clinic's Electronic Medical Record is expected to be fully active by the first of March. Administrator Lacy said he expected the system to be activated in the lab within the next three to six months. (See related article.)

The planning to purchase a new generator continues. Administrator Lacy said Tim Lenz, PEC engineers, will begin the design for the generation changes. He has recommended that the hospital purchase a 150 kilowatt generator instead of a 200 kilowatt generator. He also recommended that the generator be placed outdoors near where the present generator is located.

### Hospital has been busy

Administrator Lacy reported that the hospital has been very busy since the first of the year. There were 85 discharge days in January which was four more than in 2005. There were 481 people using the physical therapy services. The highest usage of these services in 2005 was in 384 in April.

Director John pointed out in her financial report that the hospital had actually made a profit of \$34,862 in January. There had also been a profit of \$861 in the Bird City Clinic.

She talked about working to understand the president's proposal for significant cuts to the Medicare and Medicaid programs while the requiring complicated changes. She said the questionable changes cost a lot to implement and there is not much of a savings to the Medicare program in return and yet the hospital is forced to bear the burden.

### In other business

In other business: • The board elections found Jerry Toler taking the seat of chairman. Joy Anderegg was also nominated but declined. Traci Neitzel was re-elected treasurer and Ms. Anderegg was re-elected as secretary. • Administrator Lacy said the hospital/clinic would be holding a health fair on March 27 through 29. More information will be available.

## Relay teams to organize

Cheyenne County American Cancer Relay for Life organizers are starting to prepare for the seventh Relay for Life by holding a team captain meeting at 10 a.m. on March 11 at the St. Francis Equity meeting room.

"We are needing teams for the Relay," said Deb Lindsten, chairman. "Anyone wanting to organize a team should plan to come to the meeting or call me at 785-332-2022."

The Cheyenne County Relay for Life will be held on Aug. 19 and 20 at Sawhill Park in St. Francis. People are urged to gather their family, friends, co-workers, neighbors — everybody and anybody to help fight cancer. The money raised through the Relay for Life goes to help fight cancer.

"Remember that cancer doesn't stop for anything so why should we?" Ms. Lindsten said. "Help us to fight for a cure by making a commitment now!"