

Dairy owners look forward to future

By Jan Katz Ackerman

When Tom and Judy McCarty moved their dairy operation to Rexford from Pennsylvania in 1999, they brought holiday traditions with them they share with family and staff members.

"We had no inkling of the impact we'd have on the school and economics of this area," Tom McCarty said. "We're working with 14 families and about 30 children, but not all of them are in school."

The McCartys had just finished Christmas shopping for the families and children.

"To me, it's a big deal and we always try to do something for them at Christmas," Tom McCarty said. "We want to show them respect for their respect for us."

Respect, determination and hard work are the elements paying off for the McCartys, who, in August 2007 will open a second dairy four miles east of Bird City in Cheyenne County.

"With three boys here, we definitely can do more than we are now," McCarty said. "We are in a position to have more management skills used and have the ability to expand the boys' horizons. That's our biggest goals."

Referring to Mike, Clay and Ken, McCarty said a fourth son, David, who manages a dairy near Syracuse may one day join his brothers in

northwest Kansas. As far as the facility opening in Cheyenne County, Mike will manage it.

Mike said the biggest impact the new dairy will have will be moving yet again. He moved to Rexford from Wyalusing, Pa., in 1999. He said he and his wife, Amy, and their two sons, will continue the fourth generation dairy business. He said while the move and opening a new dairy will be challenging, he is excited about meeting new people and hiring new employees.

"The people we've met are great," he said, "But it's hiring new employees and going from zero cows to 1,800 cows in 45 days that will be pretty stressful."

At the dairy located five miles southwest of Rexford on U.S. Highway 83, the McCartys' 16 employees generate about 13,000 gallons of milk each day.

Milking 22 of 24 hours each day, the dairy is operated in three shifts which rotate each month. Mike said the rotation schedule was suggested by the employees themselves so time with their family could vary throughout the day.

The day shift leader is Leonardo Ortega. He said he enjoys working at the dairy because although he earned an accounting degree in Mexico, he was only able to make \$80 per week at his former job.

"I like working here because I work every day and had no pay in

Mexico," Ortega said.

Tom McCarty said while talk of Congressional changes for immigrant workers was a hot topic earlier this year, things have seemed to settle down.

"Things are stable," he said.

McCarty attributes hard work and good workers to the success of the 1,900 head dairy.

Seed money secured from the Century II Foundation, a nonprofit foundation in Bird City, is helping the McCartys prepare for the expansion.

"The Century II Foundation has been great to work with," Tom McCarty said.

Century II director Cathy Domsch was unavailable for comment. Carol Redding, Cheyenne County Development Director, said she is excited about the new business for her county.

"We know the dairy is going to benefit the county and school," she said, "I'm all for it. Whatever it takes and whoever can help, that's wonderful."

Ms. Redding said she would like to see the McCartys take their new dairy "one step further," and install a digester and generate energy from the cattles' waste.

"But digesters are very expensive," she said, "But either way, the dairy will be a good thing for Cheyenne County."



BIRD FEED was unloaded Tuesday afternoon at the St. Francis Equity. Matt Smull, right, and Don Keeker unloaded 12 barrels in St. Francis and Hal Antholz has plenty more for Bird City residents.

Times staff photo by Karen Krien

Efforts being made to save pheasant population in area

By Karen Krien

Two winter snow storms back to back have left northwest Kansas snow covered. In some snowstorms, the winds drift the snow, leaving some open spots where pheasants, quail and turkey can get to food. However, in the last snowfall which started Friday, the snow was heavy and covered almost everything.

Bob Bixler, St. Francis, was concerned about the wild birds so he contacted Jim Pitman, small game coordinator for Wildlife and Parks. Mr. Pitman confirmed Mr. Bixler's concern that the loss of pheasants could be great and recommended a supplemental feeding of corn and milo to help the birds through the winter.

Mr. Bixler talked to Dale Weeks, manager of the Wheeler Equity, who donated some corn. Mr. Bixler then spread the grain in areas he thought might help the birds but soon realized that this project was much too big for him to do by himself.

That is when he organized the

"Wildlife For Pheasant Relief Effort." He talked to Hal Sager, Bird City, who donated 1,000 pounds of mixed grain. Tuesday, Matt Smull went to Bird City with a flatbed trailer and brought back 12 barrels of grain.

The grain was unloaded at the old Equity hardware building, just south of the Equity office. Three barrels with a scoop have been placed outside and people who are willing to take grain to the pheasants are urged to stop by and get what they need. (Bring a container.) The seed can also be used to feed the wildbirds in backyards.

There is additional grain in Bird City for those people wanting to help in that area. Call Mr. Sager at 785-734-2630.

"The pheasants and other birds are having a hard winter and carrying over the bird population is important for next fall's hunting season," Mr. Bixler said. "The feeding needs to be continued until there is bare ground where they can find feed."

"This has been a group effort and

we need as many people as possible out feeding the birds."

Mr. Bixler is a member of the Cheyenne County Wildlife organization. Other members helping are Chris Bracelin, Tim Stimbert and Lance Long.

He noted that having the cooperation of Tim Burr, St. Francis Equity manager, in letting the grain be stored and picked up at the old hardware building is great. Equity personnel, Don Keeker and Brian Holzworth also helped unload the grain.

"Our greatest concern is that the grain gets to the birds," Mr. Bixler said.

If people know where pheasants, quail and turkey are living such as in wind breaks or dense tall grass, they are asked to pick up a bucket of grain and scatter it. Farmers driving to and from town may also know areas where they can scatter additional grain.

"The snow is great for the crops and pastures but it can be a killer for birds unable to find food," Mr. Bixler said. "I hope everyone who possibly can will help take care of our wildlife."



The mounds of snow piled around the flag pole make half mast look really low. The snow was piled in front of the high school to allow room to park. Flags will remain at half mast in honor of former President Gerald Ford's passing for one month.

Times Staff photo by Melinda Basnett

Board reviews projects; looks toward new year

By Karen Krien

The last Cheyenne County Hospital Board meeting of the year on Thursday was brief with members talking about what projects were completed in the past year and what projects they thought were important for the new year.

Swede Calnon, board member, said he thought the main projects had been completed and were a great improvement. One of the last improvements made this year had been adding a heating system to the emergency room drive as well as the ramp to the front entrance of the hospital. Mr. Calnon said, that, while it is a small improvement, it is one that would be appreciated by many.

Jerry Toler, board chairman, said he saw most of the major work as being done and suggested that 2007 be used to take care of the detail work.

The emergency entrance to the back of the hospital and the physical therapy department upgrading were two major improvements made at the hospital in 2006. Dr. Rebecca Allard will be coming to the hospital this summer.

Les Lacy, hospital administrator, said there had been an error made on the hospital's web site and there is NO \$10 million project planned. He said that error had been corrected.

Mr. Toler pointed out that the bond used to remodel the hospital will be paid off this summer.

Mr. Lacy commended the hospital and clinic staff as being "outstanding." He said there has been leadership training, new employees and equipment. The staff will be ready when Dr. Allard arrives. The arrival of Dr. Allard will also give Dr. Mary Beth Miller, who has been carrying a big share of the work load, a break.

Some of the future plans includes the "Memory Garden" and the automatic doors for the emer-

gency entrance. Mr. Lacy said Eddie Lauer (who has since died) had instigated the plans for the doors and the board felt it was necessary to follow through with the plans using memorial money.

Memorial money will also be used to establish the Memory Garden but it is hoped to keep the project to \$10,000 or less.

The board had some other suggestions for future plans. Traci Neitzel said the kitchen needed some major upgrading including the stove, refrigerator, freezer, counter tops and floor. Expanding the eating area was also discussed.

Jackie John, area director for Great Plains Health Alliance, was present through ITV (interactive television) from the headquarters office in Phillipsburg. She asked if the board and administrator had considered upgrading the front entrance. This had been among the plans in the past. Mr. Lacy said that since the new heating system had been installed in the cement at the front of the building, he didn't think this was feasible at this time.

She then asked if maybe an area could be used as an "airlock" at the front but, again, Mr. Lacy said that it would take six- to eight-feet for this area and there just wasn't room.

They talked about patient/employee safety and decided that the lifts for the patient rooms would be one of the most helpful pieces of equipment in this area.

Mr. Toler asked that there be more information available to the public comparing information in several area newsletters.

Talk about plans for the future will continue at later meetings.

Outpatient Clinic

Amelia Henderson, outpatient clinic coordinator, talked about what the outpatient department provides. Right now, there are seven specialists coming to the hospital. They include: James

Warren M.D., cardiologist; Charles Frankum M.D., surgeon; James Reeves DPM, podiatry; Matthew Uyemura M.D., ophthalmologist; Martin Rubinowitz M.D., oncologist; David Reed M.D., family practice; Kim Zwegardt, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. The hospital would like to have orthopedic and urology specialists.

Mr. Toler asked what can be done to entice physicians to come?

Mrs. Henderson said that part of the problem is the location of the hospital. It is a long way for physicians to travel. Another problem is the specialists are busy enough without taking on more clinics.

Mr. Lacy added that there is a shortage of specialists.

Mrs. Henderson gives epidural injections for pain control as well as assists with surgery, orders pharmaceuticals, schedules mammograms, MRI and ultra sounds.

Mrs. Henderson has been with the hospital for over 34 years. Mr. Lacy said the doctors coming to Cheyenne County say the hospital is one of the smoothest run specialty clinics.

Administrator's report

In his administrative report, Mr. Lacy said the number of patients in the hospital had declined for a short time but had increased toward the end of the month. However, those outpatients seeing the specialists had been fairly steady.

The underground telephone lines had been run and are working "great." The communication fiber optics will go underground when the weather permits.

He talked about the new generator which should be arriving shortly after the first of the year.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the board has been set for 3 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 25, in the clinic basement meeting room in St. Francis.