

Staff and volunteers respond when the tornado hit county

By Karen Krien

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The administrator commended the hospital staff and other volunteers who came forward and prepared for whatever disaster might have taken place when the tornado hit the Bird City area on March 28.

Les Lacy, administrator, told the board at the April 26 Cheyenne County Hospital Board meeting, that while everyone was relieved that the tornado had not been as devastating as it could have been, one positive aspect was that, "it gave the hospital an opportunity to exercise its' disaster plan under a very real threat. Any good exercise will identify opportunities for improvement, this was no exception."

The staff was on standby, he said, with wheelchairs and oxygen at every room so they could move at a moment's notice. He said there were five patients in the hospital that day and there were positive responses from all involved. He also noted that additional emergency supplies were located to patient receiving areas and that surrounding Hospitals and Ambulances had been alerted to the potential for a high number of injured.

"I was proud of the crew and the community volunteers," he said.

He and the board talked about the use of the generator and how different departments would handle the lack of power for a longer length of time. Mr. Lacy said the new generator was in and installed.

Jackie John, area director for Great Plains Health Alliance, the company which leases the hospital, said at the Alliance's Roundtable meeting on March 30, the disaster which snowstorms cause, was discussed.

Administrators impacted by the major ice storms shared their experiences. They found that the frail, elderly people needed support with heat and electricity to operate their oxygen concentrators. Some assisted and extended care units in these communities did not have emergency generators and requested to transfer their residents to the hospital.

She said that hospitals have disaster drills but they mostly do drills on trauma situations. In most cases, the generators were not providing power to all areas needed in an extended disaster. At some facilities, contractors had installed red emergency outlets (indicates generator

powered outlet) at locations that really didn't have emergency power. Making provisions for a fuel to keep generators was a challenge when the gas pumps did not have electricity.

Mrs. John said that those saving the day in every community were the loyal employees who worked more hours, traveled on icy roads and worked where needed.

"The most valuable resources hospital's have is the people," she said.

Community Service Project
Mr. Lacy said the Community Service Project grant application will be sent by May 4. He said that \$20,000 has already been committed.

If granted, the income tax credits will be used to buy six room lifts and renovate the hospital's kitchen/dining area.

The hospital has received three other tax credits which were used to remodel the clinic, physical therapy and ambulance entrance, along with the installation and purchase of the heating and air conditioning system in the hospital. Les Lacy, hospital administrator, will be writing for the Kansas tax credits.

There are around 100 applications but only about 28 are granted. He estimates that the two projects will take around \$135,000.

If the hospital receives authorization for the credits, tax credits would be available for 2007 and 2008, all donations will need to be in by Dec. 31, 2008. The community can help with letters of support and commitment for the tax credit project. Mr. Lacy said a letter had been sent out requesting this support to people who had participated in the past.

Office manager's report
Erika Lehman, clinic office manager, talked about what her job entails. She said that she was new on the job but liked her job as she sees herself and the clinic as "making a difference in people's lives."

"The clinic has a great staff who

know what their jobs are," she said. One of the challenges, she said, was making sure the clinic is in compliance and said Great Plains Health Alliance, the company which leases the hospital, is a good source of information.

She talked about the electronic medical records system, notebook computers are used to document each patient visit in the clinic. She sees the system as being better and easier than the paper record, creating a better "paper trail." She looks forward to implementing the full capability of the system.

She said the patients have commented on the modules and the feedback has been very positive.

She said the staff has talked about expanding clinic hours in both the St. Francis and Bird City clinics. Jackie John, area director for Great Plains, suggested evening clinic or Saturday morning clinic hours.

Mr. Lacy commended Ms. Lehman, saying she was "very aggressive in her work — a self-starter."

In other business

In other business:
• Mr. Lacy said the hospital has reached a 15 year volume record with 14 patients in the hospital at one point in March.

• The staff is once again looking at the options for equipment used for storing digital imaging. The administrator plans to have bids available for the board to talk about at the May meeting.

• The hospital has received \$5,000 in funding on the statewide Diabetes Quality of Care project. The money will be used to improve help for diabetic patients.

• The hospital was approved for a \$10,000 emergency preparedness grant and a Small Hospital Improvement grant of \$9,000. This grant will be used to improve patient safety and quality of care.

Next meeting

The next hospital board meeting will be held at 3 p.m. on Thursday, May 24, in the basement of the clinic in St. Francis.



Bill Harper sang and played his guitar at The Frosty Mug in McDonald over Mother's Day weekend. He featured many favorite Country and Western songs from as far back as the 1950s.

Times Staff photo by Melinda Basnett

McDonald News By Vera Kacirek

Gail and Kay Miller attended the Dance Recital in St. Francis on Saturday. Their granddaughter, Kelsey Miller, was a participant.

Many people in the community enjoyed the presentation by the Cornerstone Bible Institute Choir at the Federated Church on Friday evening. Two of the choir members, Kendrick Rozelle and Ryne Hammon were overnight guests of Ray and Marlene Johnson.

On Saturday Ray and Marlene Johnson were guests of the Ted Bethell family to celebrate the 35th wedding anniversary of Ted and Dixie Bethell.

On Sunday Ray and Marlene Johnson attended the graduation exercises at the Weskan High School. After the graduation they

were guests of Jade Sexson at the home of her parents. Enroute home they visited Lewis Moreland at the Goodland Good Samaritan Home.

Members of the Federated Church and their guests enjoyed a Mother's Day dinner at the Church on Sunday noon.

Betty Knapp went to Goodland on Thursday to do some baby-sitting for the Purvis children.

Jerry and Betty Knapp attended the Cornerstone Bible Institute Choir on Friday evening. On Sunday they met some missionary friends in Goodland for supper. They were George and Ann-Brett Smajek.

Karlyne Atchison and Amelia Banister attended the confirmation

at the Lutheran Church in Bird City on Sunday. Teryn Carmichael was one of the confirmandees. They enjoyed the dinner following the Confirmation service.

John and Nita Giles of Weed, Calif. are guests of Joan Tongish this week. Nita is Joan's sister. On Saturday the Hopkins family held a family reunion at the home of Clinton and Linda Hopkins. Family attending were; Joan Tongish, John and Nita Giles, Kenny and Jeanette Chisham, Diane Klein, Terry Chisham, Mike and Diane Tongish, Doug Tongish, and Jerry and Cheryl Hopkins. On Sunday the group enjoyed dinner at the Aberdeen Steak House.

Lisa Johnson visited her mother, Phyllis Wilkinson on Wednesday and brought a cake for Mother's Day and birthday.

R. J. and Susie Sabatka came to the Laddie Kacirek home on Saturday to do several "honey-do" jobs for Mother's Day and to help with the yard work.

Cheryl Wilkinson and Lori and Claire Denny attended the graduation exercises at Fort Hays College on Saturday. Cheryl's niece Crystal Cook was among the graduates.

Cheylin senior named

Aubrey Kehlbeck of Cheylin High School and Alecia Zimelman of St. Francis Community High School have been named Governor's Scholars.



Kehlbeck

lected to attend the 24th annual Governor's Scholars Award Program on May 6 in Topeka.

The recognition ceremony honors the top academic 1 percent of Kansas high school seniors.

"These young Kansans have shown serious dedication to their studies and strong commitment to their goals," Governor Sebelius said. "I want to commend each of them, along with their families, teachers and mentors who have supported their efforts along the way. They should be very proud."

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Thursday, May 24

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Cheylin High School Entertainment: 7-8 p.m.

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