

Public interest meeting held to answer residents' questions

By Linda Schneider
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On Tuesday, Cathy Domsch, executive director of Bird City Century II Development Foundation, held a "Public Interest Meeting for Housing in Bird City. On hand to answer questions was Northwest Kansas Housing, Inc. (NWKH) director, Loyce Schamberger. In addition, council members Wade Carmichael, Deb Smith and Mayor Troy Burr were present.

Moderate Income Housing Project

The meeting was to bring information to the community of Bird City about the Moderate Income Housing Project the City Council is promoting. Also, Century II is researching to see if the community is interested in an Assisted Living building project. The meeting outlined the facts, the description and the income scale of the housing project. The information given by power point expanded on what was already known by those of the community who attended. It was a meeting mostly of questions and

answers.

One question was centered on the \$25,000 that NWKH was requiring Bird City to invest. Chuck Kribs asked, "What is the source of the \$25,000?" Cathy said the Bird City Council had applied and received a grant from Century II for the \$25,000. Director Schamberger continued by saying that in the past, communities who invest and secured property to build have more success than those communities that NWKH just went in and built the homes. Community involvement was the key. Mayor Troy Burr added that building public utilities such as sewers and lights would be a "security deposit."

The project would call for two single-family units and two duplex units, making six units. The single-family units will be a rent-to-own contract, which at the end of 15 years; the tenant would have some cash equity built up in the house and be able to take advantage of no interest loan and state grants. The duplexes are not rent to own and must stay in the passion of NWKH for 30 years.

The one disadvantage brought up by Dir. Schamberger was that whoever was in the house at the end of 15 years would be eligible for the benefits. This means if after 14 years 11 months the tenant moves out, he or she will lose all the benefits and when the new tenant moves in, he or she will reap the benefits at 15 years.

One of the advantages is the income limit scale; the income would be assessed at the time of application. The rent will not change if the tenant's income increases. A good question was asked by Larry Henry about property taxes. Mr. Henry asked, "Will our property taxes go up?" Dir. Schamberger answered, "We do not have complete information about that, but if property taxes go up, this means your property value has gone up also." Mayor Burr added that the housing would increase the city's tax base simply because tenants would be paying more taxes with a house than having the lot vacant.

She went on to say that in the communities where they have put up these homes, the NWKH is



NORTHWEST KANSAS HOUSING director Loyce Schamberger and Century II director Cathy Domsch answering questions asked by Bird City residents.

Times staff photo by Linda Schneider

Drawing for \$1,000 held on Monday

By Karen Krien

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The temperature was in the 20s, Main Street was snowpacked at about 5:30 Monday afternoon. However, that didn't stop the around 500 people from gathering in front of Jaqua Abstract to see if they were going to be one of the winners.

The Chamber of Commerce gave away three \$100 scrip prizes and the Christmas On Us drawing, sponsored by 11 businesses, gave away \$1,000, \$100, two \$50 scrip prizes as well as three business Christmas gifts. The Historical Society also gave away a Veterans Book and the winners of the Chamber's Lighting Contest and coloring contests were announced.

The big winner for the evening was Crissy Cooks, St. Francis, who took home \$1,000 in scrip. She had received her winning ticket from Hilltop General Store.

Mrs. Cooks said she was completely shocked when her number was read.

"The kids were jumping, saying 'Mommy, you won, you won,'" she said.

The scrip will come in handy at the Cooks' house as their dishwasher 'bit the dust' and she will be shopping for one. She also mentioned that they may be needing a new washing machine.

"It's going to make our Christmas a lot better!" she said. Winning the Christmas On Us second prize of \$100 was Juciara Schoenrogge. She had received her ticket at St. Francis Super's and, the day after the drawing, she donated it to the St. Francis Senior Citizens Center.

The St. Francis Area Chamber of Commerce had three \$100 scrip prizes and, like the Christmas On Us drawing, the winners had to be present to receive their prize. Those claiming their scrip money were Pat Confer,

Bonnie Straub and Kelly Doyle.

Throughout the season, the Christmas On Us promotion had eight \$50 Instant Winner prizes which were claimed by readers matching their ticket numbers with those printed in ads in the Christmas On Us pages in both *The Saint Francis Herald* and *Bird City Times*. Six of the prizes had been claimed but there were two \$50 Instant Winner prizes left.

Those having the matching numbers for the remaining two \$50 scrip Monday evening were Glenn Schliep and Kris Blair.

Winning the three business Christmas gifts were Virginia Fiedler, who won a \$25 gift certificate from Ross Manufacturing/Sunshine Travel; Wade Krien, who won a \$30 gift certificate from Park Hill Restaurant; and Amy Easter, who took home an atomic clock and a pocket weather alert radio from Video Kingdom. They were all from St. Francis.

To claim a prize, the winner had to be present. Some of the numbers drawn but were not claimed were: 025282, 012766, 247043, 025871 and 499240.

"The Christmas On Us promotion continues to grow each year," said Casey McCormick, admanager. "This year, there were approximately 52,000 tickets given away — that means \$520,000 stayed in St. Francis."

Participating businesses were:

- Bier's Hometown Store
- Goodell Greenhouse and Garden Center
- Hilltop General Store
- Owens True Value
- Parkhill Restaurant
- Ross Manufacturing
- St. Francis Super's
- Schultz's
- St. Francis Equity
- The Saint Francis Herald
- United Methodist Thrift Store
- Video Kingdom

responsible for the maintaining of the properties.

Where they have built has been typically on unkempt land and when they were finished, the community was pleased with the results. NWKH is responsible for all the maintenance and repairs for the houses.

Before tenants move in, they will be counseled on the requirements on the up keep of their homes and the yard. Dir. Schamberger made an important point by saying that Moderate Income Housing can be a great incentive to young families by making housing affordable. But, she stressed that the housing must have 100 percent occupancy to work. Research teams are investigating the potential for Bird City to have this occupancy.

Once everything has been passed and building starts, it will take 8 to 10 months to complete the building. The idea is to have local assist in the

building.

More information concerning the Moderate Income Housing Project can be obtained from the Bird City Council.

Assisted Living Housing Project

Century II and other interested Bird City residents are asking the community if there is a need for an Assisted Living Housing Project within the town limits.

This will be a community involvement project. Some of the ideas for assisted living housing were to provide in-house medical care and provide 24-hour security. The project would provide rehabilitation/recuperation, as well as social opportunities. These are just a few of the ideas Cathy Domsch thought out.

The project could also provide employment for local residents. Mrs. Domsch said that Century II does have a scholarship funds for

career training.

Century II is interested in knowing what the community needs and is taking a survey. The survey is anonymous and can be picked up at Century II on Bressler. If there is an interest, Century II will form a task force to research the information. If you are interested and want to be on this task force, let Cathy know at Century II.



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The Bird City Housing Authority has developed its Agency Plan for Fiscal Year 2008 in compliance with the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998. It is available for review at the Authority's Office located at LeBow Manor, 209 N. Rich Ave., Bird City, KS. 67731. The Authority's hours of operation are Monday through Thursday between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. In addition a public hearing will be held on Jan. 3, 2008 at the Authority's Community Room at 9 a.m. The public is invited.

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