



EMERGENCY SYSTEM was installed on Wednesday and dispatchers were at work that afternoon. Seated are dispatchers, Jim Rarick, left, Same Beeson and Jennifer Padgett, standing Tim Malone. *Times staff photo by Lauren Ross*

Emergency 911 now in service

By Karen Krien
karenk@nwkansas.com
After months of talking and planning, the new 911 system is up and running in the Cheyenne County Courthouse, St. Francis.

Carol Gamblin, communications director, said the new equipment was installed on Wednesday, Dec. 19, Southwestern Bell had made the cut-over and by that afternoon, dispatchers were training.

Pat Malone, with Bell, said this was one of the easiest and quickest cut over he had made.

Now all emergency calls requiring law enforcement, fire or ambulance will need to be made by calling 911. With the new system, the name, address and phone number of the caller will automatically come up.

Dispatchers are Jennifer Padgett and Sam Beeson, daytime; and Steve Nolan and Jim Rarick, nighttime. Mr. Nolan and Mr. Rarick came to the new dispatch office from the city where they were dispatchers. They will receive further training with the Kansas Highway Patrol Academy in the future.

Mrs. Gamblin said earlier, she didn't think they would meet the designated date to begin. She gave much of the credit to the sheriff, Craig Van Allen who put up the walls in the sheriff's office for the dispatch center and made all the arrangements for phone and electrical installations.

"His support and help has been tremendous," she said.

Informing groups
Mrs. Gamblin said she would like to speak to groups and organizations about the new 911 system and dispatch center.

"I want to explain what goes on in the center — that we do more than answer the phone and talk on a radio," she said, noting that there are times when there are two channels needing attention and there is only one person.

"It will be the job of the dispatcher to handle whatever comes up." She has a short, interesting video that people would enjoy seeing which tells a lot about what the dispatcher does.

To get more information or line up an appointment with a group, contact Mrs. Gamblin at 785-332-8880.

Commissioners discuss many items

By Karen Krien
karenk@nwkansas.com

The commissioners were told that the new 911 system equipment will be in on Monday, Dec. 17, dispatchers will start training Tuesday and they will start dispatching on Wednesday. When the decision was made to establish the 911-dispatch office in the courthouse, there were a few questions if it could be done before the first of the year.

"We did it," said Carol Gamblin, communications director.

All calls will go through the 911 system, she said.

She said much of the work had been done "in house" with Craig Van Allen doing a great deal of the work. The wiring had been installed the week before and she said it had been a tedious job and Ron Wieck and his helper had done a very well.

Sheriff Craig Van Allen said the backup radios at the city plant are not in working order and, if something were to happen to the courthouse, the city plant would be the backup base. He said that the backup radios would need to be purchased in the future.

Deborah Farland, new St. Francis Chief of Police, introduced herself, then reported that she had hired one new officer and another would be hired after the first of the year. She has one portable radio for the officer coming in December but needed another one. She wondered if the cost could be taken out of the 911 fund. She also said that the base radio used in the city police office had been moved to the sheriff's office so they needed a new base radio.

The total for these items will cost \$1,595 and the money will be taken

out of the 911 fund.

The commissioner again turned to paying the bill for the sheriff's deputy's training. The city of St. Francis had sent a bill of \$15,000 to the county for the training of Mike Blehm, who had started with the city, then transferred to the sheriff's office.

Earlier, an officer trained in Cheyenne County transferred to WaKeeney, and the county had charged only for wages. The city had charged not only for wages but had also charge benefits, lodging and mileage.

After discussion, the commissioners agreed to sent a check for \$8,158.46, which is what it cost for Officer Blehm's salary during training.

Snow removal

Snow removal was discussed. The county's policy is to not remove snow from private roads or drives unless an emergency vehicle needs to get through. Most people living in the country have their own tractors or something they can use to remove snow. If they do not, there are private businesses which will remove the snow for them.

Mr. Flemming said he had received some complaints about snow being pushed from a private drive onto County Road 14. The commissioners agreed that any landowner causing obstructions onto county roads is liable for any accidents caused by the obstruction.

Bridge plans

Road and Bridge Supervisor Dave Flemming presented state contracts for the commissioners' signatures. These were for the Runzel Bridge Project. The bridge part will cost \$135,000 and the dirt

work will cost \$180,000. The recent bridge study was reviewed but no decisions were made.

Permission was granted to purchase a used snowplow lift for a road grader.

The supervisor asked for five minutes of executive session to discuss personnel. At 10:30, Chairman Beikman announced no decisions had been made. However, the supervisor noted he will look into hiring someone part-time after the first of the year.

In other business

In other business:

- The county meal allowance will go from \$10 per meal to \$12 per meal.

- The commissioners approved the county's share of the household hazardous waste bill \$1,759.79.

- Commissioner Ernie Ketzner was appointed as the commissioner's representative to the Resource Conservation and Development advisory council.

- A warrant from the appraiser's office was held from approval until more mileage documentation could be provided. This was under the

advisement of the auditor.

- Gary Rogers, emergency preparedness director, said President Bush had agreed with Governor Sebelius in declaring all 105 counties in Kansas as emergency disasters. The commissioners signed a resolution declaring Cheyenne County as a state of local disaster emergency area. Mr. Rogers noted the State and Local Assistant funding of \$2,500 had been received from the state of Kansas and that one-half of that amount will go toward paying his part-time help.

- Kim Zwegardt and David Butler, representing Cheyenne County Development Corporation, discussed the Cheyenne County Strategic Plan. After review and discussion, the Strategic Plan was approved. Mrs. Zwegardt said the corporation is in the process of becoming part of the multi-county Northwest County Enterprise Zone.

Next meeting

The next commissioners' meeting will be held starting at 8 a.m. on Monday, Dec. 31, in the commissioners' room.

Book Review

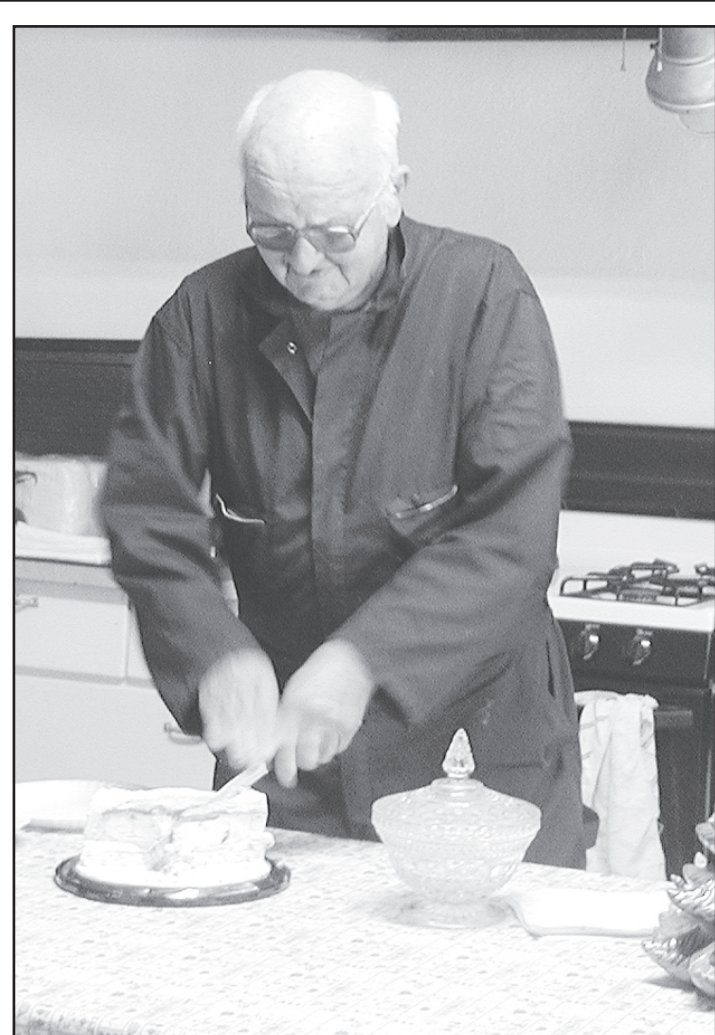
Home to Holly Springs
By Jan Karon

After more than 38 years, Father Tim Kavanagh returns to his childhood home of Holly Springs, Miss., on a profoundly personal journey.

Whatever became of Tommy Noles, his forbidden childhood friend, and Peggy, the loving woman who was like a second mother? What were the facts behind the court trial that drove the Kavanagh family even further apart?

He figures Thomas Wolfe was right: You can't go home again. Then he discovers the truth: A surprising number of old connections have miraculously survived time and neglect.

In this first of the Father Tim novels, Jan Karon takes her celebrated Mitford character to territory he has long avoided, the uncharted territory of family, giving us a spellbinding and poignant narrative laced with the wisdom and forgiveness only a trip back home can inspire.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAY CAKE is cut by John DaPron in the Senior Citizen Center. Mr. DaPron had the only senior birthday.

Help Wanted
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\$8 - 7th grade & up 9 - 11 p.m.

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The Saint Francis Herald
and
The Bird City Times

Papers will be printed one day later on both Christmas and New Year's week. All Ads & Copy **MUST** be in by Fri., Dec. 21 and Fri., Dec. 28

The Saint Francis Herald Will be CLOSED
All Day on:
Mon., Dec. 24 and Tues., Dec. 25

**Closed All Day on:
Mon, Dec. 31st & Tues., Jan. 1st**