



SOMETIMES THE ANSWER does not come easily. After their first week in their new classroom, the Cheylin first graders sit with their teacher, Kayla Bursch, as she asks them thought provoking questions. Times staff photo by Linda Schneider

## New classrooms for the first and second graders

By Linda Schneider  
dublins@hotmail.com

When the Cheylin Board of Education voted to combine the first and second grade classes for the 2006-2007 school years, it was about the numbers.

Then at the December 2007 board of education meeting when the members voted to separate the first and second classes, it was about the numbers again.

When the decision to combine the classes was made, Kathy Weber, who had taught first, second and third, then became both the first and second grade teacher. Because the first grade class had only three students and there were seven in the second grade, the decision to combine was made to give the students a better social atmosphere.

Since combining the two classes, the school population had increased because of families moving into the Cheylin School district, 17 new students were enrolled in 2007.

The increase of families moving is partly due to the new dairy opening nearby. Furthermore, as the dairy continues to build toward completion, hiring must be done to keep up with the growing needs of operating the dairy. The result is, with more hiring, there is the potential of having more students. Nowhere has this

been more evident than in the combined first and second grade classes.

When the classes were first combined in the 2006 school year, Mrs. Weber had the assistance of Jeri Antholz, a teacher aide. With 10 students, there were challenges, but students were still able to get the one-on-one attention Mrs. Weber wanted to give them. In 2007, the combined class increased to 16 students.

Sixteen students is by no means a large class, but now Mrs. Weber was teaching two different classes — each with their own distinct curriculums — each with their own social needs, and she could not teach the first graders together with the second graders.

Kayla Bursch joined the Cheylin School staff for the 2007-2008 school year as a student teacher to finish her requirements to graduate with a teaching degree. For her assignment, she was joined with Mrs. Weber in the combined first and second grade classes. She finished her student teaching assignment and graduated December 2007.

The most Mrs. Bursch had hoped for was to get a substituting teacher position after she graduated. However, when the education board decided in



SECOND GRADER Ena Salinas Muniz working on her art project as her teacher, Kathy Weber, looks on. Times staff photo by Linda Schneider

to separate the first and second graders, she applied and she was approved for the position of first grade teacher.

"The quality of education, nor the budget, has never been the issue in combining or separating, it has always been about the

student numbers," said Superintendent David Zumbahlen.

Mrs. Weber and Mrs. Bursch now are teaching in separate classrooms and giving their students that one-on-one attention that the students need.

## Accounting error found

By Karen Krien  
karenk@nwkansas.com

At the Jan. 15 meeting of the Cheyenne County Commissioners, they were surprised to find that an accounting error had been made and the county's general fund was not in the hole!

At the Dec. 31 meeting, the commissioners were shocked to find that the county was nearly \$94,000 over budget. Andy Beikman, commissioner chairman, said in November, there was still 19 percent of the budget left — more than enough to pay everything to the end of the year. However, it appeared that the county's health insurance had some large claims against it and that must be the reason for going over budget.

At the Jan. 15 meeting, Dolores Jenik, treasurer, informed the commissioners that there had been a \$300,000 accounting error and that, in the end, the 2007 General Fund was well within budget.

"It was a relief," Mr. Beikman said.

### Grant

Dave Flemming, road and bridge supervisor, said the county had received a safety grant for up to \$50,000. This grant pays for 90 percent of any project that will help improve safety. The county will be liable for 10 percent of the project as well as picking up the engineering costs.

The supervisor felt that the Armknecht curve, located in southwest Cheyenne County, near the Colorado-Kansas line. The road has a 90-degree curve which would be rounded out.

The first part of November 2006, a 24-year-old man was killed on the curve. In March, Raymond Armknecht, St. Francis, had offered the county land to change the lay of a curve on the county road. Mr. Armknecht said there had been several wrecks but no one had been killed before.

The grant was signed.

**Minimum maintenance road**  
A minimum maintenance road was discussed. The road was

drifted shut and a gas company needed access to a drilling spot. Even though it was a minimum maintenance road, the commissioners felt that the county was still responsible for making it passable. The supervisor said he will see if a farmer in that area would be willing to open the drift using his snow blower.

### Raises

Supervisor Flemming said he'd like to increase the pay level for department employees, Tal Earl and Tony Vandike. The commissioners approved.

He then suggested merit raises for the department employees. After discussion, it was decided against merit increases, but the commissioners agreed to look into longevity raises. They will do this at budget time in June of 2009.

### Emergency medical service report

Jannelle Bowers, emergency medical service director, presented the department's year-end budget figures. Write offs in the amount of \$23,479 were approved. These write offs include many bills that have been turned over to the Kansas Setoff Program.

Mrs. Bowers asked for five minutes executive session to discuss financial matters of the third party. Executive session was granted. No decision was made after coming out of the session.

New furniture for the new ambulance building was discussed with no decisions being made.

### In other business

In other business:

- Those given permission to attend meetings or workshops were: Treasurer Jenik and Dan Schlittenhardt, noxious weed supervisor.

- The agreement to treat weeds for Kansas Department of Transportation was signed.

### Next meeting

The next meeting of the commissioners has been set for 8 a.m. on Thursday, Jan. 31, in the commissioners' room in the courthouse, St. Francis.

## Blood drive doors will open at 8 a.m.

By Karen Krien  
karenk@nwkansas.com

The American Red Cross blood drive will be held in St. Francis on Thursday (today). The doors will open at 8 a.m. and people are urged to give blood until 2:30. The Red Cross is setting up in the grade school gym at 307 E. Webster.

Donating blood is safe and easy. Each donation can save up to three lives.

"When you give blood, you give another laugh, another hug, another birthday," said Cinda Dankenbring, coordinator. "Your blood could mean the world to someone who needs it and their family."

## Kansas Day in Bird City is Tuesday

Kansas will be celebrating its birthday and the 79th observance of Cheyenne County's Kansas Day has been set for Tuesday, Jan. 29, in Bird City.



Oliva

Registration will start at 10 a.m. at the Legion hall followed by a potluck meal held at noon.

The program will begin at 1 p.m. with Leo E. Oliva, Kansas historian, as the guest speaker. In addition to Dr. Oliva's presentation, entertainment will include performances by Cheylin and St. Francis students, the St. Francis Singers and the Swingin' Seniors.

Dr. Oliva has been studying and writing about Kansas history since 1959. His topic will be "Rowdy Kansas Territory: Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Our Turbulent Times."

The presentation is a series of vignettes of a few important events that help better understand the troublesome territorial period and the struggle to make Kansas a free state.

Dr. Oliva, a graduate of Fort Hays State University, earned graduate degrees at the University of Denver. A former university professor who retired to take over a family farming operation near Woodston, Dr. Oliva continues to farm and write history.

He is the author of Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail, six of the eight volumes in the Kansas Forts Network series, and Fort Union and the Frontier Army in the Southwest. He writes a weekly newspaper column, "Our Kansas Heritage," and is editor and publisher of the Santa Fe Trail Association quarterly, Wagon Tracks, now in its 22nd year. As a frequent lecturer on Kansas history, the frontier army and overland trails, Dr. Oliva brings history alive for his audiences.

Area residents are welcome to attend the entire Kansas Day festivities at Bird City and to hear Dr. Oliva speak.



CHEYLIN MUSIC AND BAND teacher, Rose Hengen, rehearsing with the fourth graders the song they will be singing on Kansas Day. They will be performing at the Bird City American Legion. Times staff photo by Linda Schneider

