

## Council vote increases loan for city lagoon

By Linda Schneider  
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After making corrections to last month's meeting minutes and paying the monthly bills, the Bird City City Council members settled into the evening of public concern over increased local drinking, reviewing budget for the construction of the water waste lagoon and maintenance of city equipment.

### Public agenda

Susan Chomor opened the floor with the request for a sheriff deputy to be on duty within the city limits 24-seven days a week. She expressed concern with the increase of beer can littered around the city. She believes that is an indication of increased public drinking.

"How do you propose to pay for a full-time deputy?" said Mayor Burr.

"That is a good one," said Ms. Chomor.

Ms. Chomor suggested the dairy, that has been recently built, could be a way of bringing revenue for the hiring of a sheriff.

Mayor Burr said it is not enough money for a full-time sheriff on staff with benefits. He went on to say that the present contract with the Cheyenne County Sheriff Department at \$30,000 a year is the best solution and the littering of beer cans would not disappear even if there was a full-time deputy.

Lorne White, council member, mentioned that deputy Frank Serrano lives in Bird City.

Ms. Chomor then suggested a driver under influence checkpoint, at which Sheriff Craig Van Allen said setting one up would entail legal issues and extra manpower, and the public must be made aware of the checkpoint.

Later during his report about checkpoints Sheriff Van Allen said,

"How much is enforcement and when does it become oppression?" Adding that there were two driving-under-the-influence arrests in January.

Mayor Burr ended the discussion by saying the city could not justify the expense.

### Water waste lagoon

Chris Miller, Miller and Associates engineering, brought three bids, representing Nebraska, Colorado and Kansas, for the construction of the water waste lagoon. The lowest coming from BFD Construction out of Curtis, Neb., at \$749,529.

Still, the original estimated budget for construction was set at \$678,000, the lowest bid would 10 percent higher than the original estimate.

For the construction to begin, Mr. Miller was asking the council members to increase the city's credit line by applying for a \$50,000 loan. It would be an "as-needed" loan. By applying for the loan, construction would progress without any delays due to unexpected expenses.

Mr. Miller presented the council members with different viable possibilities to reduce production costs. In addition, he showed that an increase of 76 cents per customer per month would generate revenue.

Mr. White brought up the concern of future cost increases in construction. Mr. Miller said there would be no further expenses.

Frank Serrano, council member, motioned to apply for the \$50,000 loan. Motion carried.

Later in the meeting, the \$50,000 loan was increased to \$71,000 for the building or purchasing of a back-up generator for the lift station. Mr. Miller again said the loan increase was as needed only.

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CHEYLIN MATH TEACHER, Kevin Dixon, takes time out to give Lincoln Pochop instructions with a math

problem. Also pictured is Colleen Shrader.

Times staff photo by Linda Schneider

## Front step project to be re-bided

By Karen Krien

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The county clerk told the commissioners that he had a conference call concerning the courthouse front steps project. He learned that the project will be re-bid with the bids to be opened at the Feb. 29 commissioners' meeting.

Greg Kite, former St. Francis resident and the person responsible for writing a grant to replace the steps to their original state, and Eric Johnson, contractor with who specializes in reconstruction of historical sites, had called Terry Miller, clerk, to give an update on when the steps would be replaced. The steps have been closed for over a year after the county's insurance company deemed the steps to be unsafe.

Contractor Troy Porter and his crew had replaced the steps in 2006 but, at the Dec. 15, 2006, commissioners' meeting, J.R. Landenberger, St. Francis city supervisor, said there was at least 3/8-inch difference in some of the steps and they could be considered a danger to those using the stairs. Later, the insurance company had ordered the steps closed.

In the meantime, Mr. Kite, who is also the president of the Sedgwick Historical Society, read about the replacement of the steps. He immediately contacted Mr. Miller asking the commissioners to consider replacing the steps back to the original state.

He went onto say that the courthouse was a beautiful show piece and appeared to be

much the same as when it was constructed in 1924.

"It has excellent integrity and over-all appearance," Mr. Kite said. "The commissioners have done a fabulous jobs (of keeping it up) for years and years and years."

Replacing the steps with limestone would cost far more than cement but, Mr. Kite offered to write for a grant (at no cost to the county). Several months later, the Kansas State Historical Society awarded the county a Heritage Trust Fund Grant of \$78,384 to replace the steps with limestone. The county would pay the remaining \$18,616 of the costs. It was noted that the county's cost was less than it would have been to run the concrete steps.

The commissioners had

hoped to have the steps in before winter weather set in but, when the bids came in, they were higher than expected. The contractor advised waiting until after the first of the year and put the project out for bids again.

At the Friday meeting, the commissioners agreed to again seek bids on the project. With the help of the Kansas State Historical Society, two new concrete companies had been identified and Mr. Johnson would see if the companies would be interested in bidding on the steps.

They are hoping to have the project re-bid and the bids opened at the Feb. 29 commissioners' meeting but nothing is definite.

Under the guidelines of the grant, the project is to be completed by August.

## Arikaree Breaks not voted one of Kansas 8 Wonders

The votes are in and Cheyenne County's Arikaree Breaks didn't win.

More than 24,000 people from all 50 states cast votes to determine Kansas' most important natural or manmade wonders.

The winners were announced by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius in a ceremony at the Capitol on Kansas Day, Jan. 29. The winners were selected from 24 finalists; eight attractions were chosen because the Kansas Sampler Foundation, organizer of the project, bases its criteria on eight rural culture elements.

The winners are (in alphabetical order): the Big Well, Greensburg; Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, Barton and Stafford counties; Eisenhower

Presidential Library and Museum, Abilene; Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Center, Hutchinson; Kansas Underground Salt Museum, Hutchinson; Monument Rocks & Castle Rock, Gove County; St. Fidelis Church (Cathedral of the Plains), Victoria; and the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, Chase County.

Representatives from all 24 finalists as well as over a thousand fourth and fifth graders and other fans of Kansas were on hand to hear the announcement.

"It's very exciting to announce what the public chose as our very best in terms of places totally unique to Kansas or sites that are iconic," said Marci Penner, director of the Kansas Sampler Foundation. "We'd love it if the fun of the contest

would launch a wave of exploring Kansas!"

The 8 Wonders of Kansas is a project of the Kansas Sampler Foundation, a non-profit whose mission is to preserve and sustain rural culture and believes that educating the public about what there is to see and do in the state helps make a difference for all Kansas communities, regardless of size.

Following is just a bit about what makes each Wonder unique. More information and photos can be found at 8wonders.org.

• Big Well: The construction of the 1887 well was an engineering marvel in its day and it is the world's largest hand-dug well.

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AT THE BIRD CITY LIBRARY, Elsa Craig and Guinevere Burr listen as their mother, Ann Burr reads a book for storytime.

Times staff photo by Linda Schneider

## Library opens its doors for storytime and craft program

The Bird City Library has a story time and craft program, and a new reading program.

Starting at 10 through 10:30 a.m. on Fridays, the library will be having story time for ages 3 through 7 followed by crafts and a snack. This week's books are, *I need a Friend* by Sherry Kafka; *Best Friends* by Miriam Cohen; *Do You Want To Be My Friend?* by Eric Carle and *What Mommies Do Best* by Laura Numeroff.

In addition, the library is starting a new reading program called Junior Readers for ages 8 through 10. This program focuses on the young readers sharing books they have read and title suggestions. This group will be under adult supervision, but not lead by an adult. It will give the readers an opportunity to learn about how to have group discussions and allowing each to contribute to the discussions. It is also at 10

through 10:30 a.m. on Fridays. Both programs will follow the school schedule.

Ann Burr and Linda Schneider will be the volunteers for story time. This program is a great way to get the kids interested in reading. Just bring the kids by and drop off, or stay and see what Bird City Library has to offer with upcoming events, new book titles, and reading programs.

## Looking Back

25 years ago - 1983

Senator Bob Dole was the featured speaker of the 53rd annual Kansas Day held in Bird City. He was given a reception and the chance to mingle with the locals.

Gospel recording artist, Steve Wilkins appeared at the Wesleyan Church in Bird City. Ivan W. Wyatt, president of the Kansas Farmers Union, told the Kansas Senate Agriculture

and Small Business Committee that the total exemption of farm machinery the previous year by the state legislature "only shifted the tax burden and didn't help Kansas farmers all that much."



BIRD CITY RESIDENTS, Janet Scharnikow, Shirley Statley and Donna Johnson making a stop by The Goodland Grind and Gallery to have lunch and admire Marilyn Frisbie's paintings.

Times staff photo by Linda Schneider