

Application closing date is March 15

March 15 is the application closing date for certain crops under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), according to Jack A. Salava, acting state executive director for the Kansas Farm Service Agency. Crops eligible for these benefits are limited to those not insurable in the county and are produced for food or fiber.

The March date is the final date to pay the applicable service fee and obtain this coverage for cane feed, silage, millet and other coarse grains. The administrative service fee is \$250 per crop per administrative county not to exceed \$750 per producer per administrative county and a \$1875 maximum fee for multi-county producers. Interested producers must pay the fee and file form CCC-471, Application for Coverage, by the application closing deadline.

This coverage entitles eligible producers to a payment of 55 percent of an average market price for the commodity if a natural di-

aster caused a 50 percent production loss or greater of an eligible crop.

In the unfortunate event that a producer does suffer a loss on their particular crop, a form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, must be filed with FSA within 15 calendar days after the disaster occurrence, or the date the loss becomes apparent to the producer.

Producers are limited to \$100,000 in benefits per person per crop year, they must certify crop acres by applicable deadlines, maintain production evidence for 3 years, have less than \$500,000 Non-farm Adjusted Gross Income, and must comply with conservation compliance provisions in order to be eligible.

Interested producers shall contact the Farm Service Agency at 785-332-2183 prior to the March 15 application closing date to obtain the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program coverage.



BIRD CITY HAS BEEN experiencing some uncommon weather changes in the past few weeks. In the span of 24-hours, temperatures can drop drastically from a warm 60 degrees to a snowy 30 degrees. Residents can go to sleep under clear and starry skies, only to wake up to a blanket of snow on their lawns.



(l to r) DESTINY CLEMANS, CHRISTINA FRINK and Jesie Frisbie are out on the Cheylin playground taking advantage of the pleasantly warm weather in February.
Times staff photo by Linda Schneider

Owners leave behind rat race

By Linda Schneider
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It has been said that truth is stranger than fiction. The story behind the Bird City Diner's owners, Dennis and Linda Whitmore, is not as strange as it is how two people left behind the rat race to live more-simple lives.

Originally, they lived in Denver, Colo., and owned a home in Wheeler, just 9 miles west of Bird City on U.S. 36. They had made a few trips to the northwest corner of Kansas, liked what they saw and started looking on the internet for a place.

"Wheeler is where we got our first taste of Kansas," said Mr. Whitmore. "It became a getaway place."

Then a few years ago, Mrs. Whitmore's mother, Sue Evans, moved to their Wheeler home to take care of the place. And the more the Whitmores returned to Wheeler to relax and getaway from the bustle of Denver, the more they enjoyed the slow and easy pace of the area. Soon they were looking to make Kansas their permanent home and started to look at the vacant little diner on the corner of Bird Ave., Bird City, and U.S.



NEW BUSINESS OWNERS (l to r) Linda and Dennis Whitmore, and helpers Joe and Brenda Weverka, take a break at the Bird City Diner.
Times staff photo by Linda Schneider

36, and their dream began to take shape.

It was November 2007, when Dennis and Linda seriously looked into purchasing what would become Bird City Diner. However, running a diner was new to both of them. Mr. Whitmore had been a dental manager/technician for 35 years and Mrs. Whitmore had worked for the Caterpillar Company in the oil lab department and in a dental office. In fact, before living in Denver, they met in a dental office in Lake

Havasu, Ariz.

Since opening the diner in the spring of 2008, it has been a family affair. Not only does Mrs. Whitmore's mother, Ms. Evans, work waiting on customers; Linda's daughter, Tiffany, helped with opening up the diner, and Linda's sister and husband, Brenda and Joe Weverka, also help with cooking and wherever needed.

Mr. and Mrs. Weverka, just like the Whitmores, moved to Kansas to take life at a slower pace. After

Trained weather spotters needed to protect locals

The severe weather season which can contain tornados and strong storms is coming. People in Cheyenne County are urged to become trained weather spotters to better protect residents.

Gary Rogers, emergency manager, said spotters are no longer sent out to watch approaching storms.

"We especially need farmers and rural folks to be trained so no one will need to be out in a storm," he said.

The National Weather Service in Goodland and Cheyenne County Emergency Management will be holding a storm spotter and safety training class at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 10. The class will be held in the high school cafeteria, 100 S. College, St. Francis.

It is free of charge and is intended for all age groups interested in

high plains severe weather. This program is conducted only once every year by weather service meteorologists.

It is a fun and educational training, Mr. Rogers said.

This year's class will present basic spotter training during the first hour with advanced training during the second hour.

For more information, contact the Goodland National Weather Service at 785-899-7119.

Severe Weather Awareness Week

Weather service offices across the state, in cooperation with emergency management officials, have designated the week of March 9-13 as Kansas Severe Weather Awareness Week.

The highlight of the week is the tornado drill, when weather service offices issue a test tornado warning through nor-

mal communication channels. The test warning this year will take place on Tuesday, March 10 at 1:30 p.m. It will air on all radio and television broadcast stations as well as NOAA Weather Radio All-Hazards. Everyone is encouraged to treat the test warning as if it were an actual emergency and review preparedness procedures. Municipalities throughout the state will sound their tornado sirens at that time.



Partnerships made to conserve water

The Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP), a new program, is authorized under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in the 2008 Farm Bill. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will implement this program by entering into partnership agreements with eligible entities to conserve ground and surface water or improve water quality, or both, in their region.

A notice of request for proposals (RFP) was published in the Federal Register. Proposals should be submitted to the Natural Resources Conservation Service National Headquarters and the appropriate State Conservationist by March 2.

Entities eligible to enter into partnership agreements include federally recognized Indian Tribes, states, units of local government, agricultural or silvicultural associations, or other groups of such producers, such as irrigation associations, agricultural land trusts, or other

nongovernmental organizations that have experience working with agricultural producers.

All federal funds awarded through these agreements will be paid to producers. No federal funds may be used to cover administrative expenses of partners. Nationally, \$58.4 million is available for Agricultural Water Enhancement Program financial assistance. The Resources Conservation Service chief may give higher priority to proposals located in several regions, including the Ogallala Aquifer.

The following link <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/awep/> contains complete information, including the Federal Register notice, on submitting a proposal, requirements, ranking considerations, and agreements.

A letter of review from the Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist must be included. Eric B. Banks is the State Conservationist for Kansas. His office address is NRCS, 760 South Broadway, Salina, KS 67401; fax 785-823-4540.

