

School board sends parents questionnaire

During the January Board of Education meeting, Superintendent Bill Porter presented a letter he would be sending out to parents of students that were attending schools in other districts and students who were home schooled.

The letter explained that decreasing student population had an adverse effect on the amount of state aid. In addition to the letter, a questionnaire is included for the parents to fill out. Parents have the option of remaining anonymous or signing and then returning the questionnaire in a stamped envelope.

Superintendent Porter included along with the questionnaire the 2008 U.S. News and World Report on America's Best Public High Schools based on data from the 2006-2007 school years.

The report analyzed 21,069 public schools in 48 states using data based on key principals that

a great high school must serve all its students well, not just college bound students.

There are three placements with an Honorable Mention category, gold, silver and bronze. Of the 21,069 schools researched, 100 (less than .005 per cent) were placed in the Gold Category, 464 (2.2 per cent) were placed in the Silver Category, 1,321 (6.6 per cent) in the Bronze Category. Seventeen public high schools were placed in the Honorable Mention Category.

Kansas had only 36 public schools qualify for the Bronze Category; Cheylin USD 103 was one of them. This is a great achievement and it could have only happened through the dedication for excellence from the board of education, David Zumbahlen, staff, students, parents and a supporting community.



BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS, (L) David Frisbie, Belinda Serrano, George Louderbaugh and Doyle Bock, look over the blueprints for the McDonald gymnasium concession stand with April Hock (center) of W Design Associates.

Times staff photo by Linda Schneider

Board appoints new member



By Linda Schneider
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With 2008 officially closed and the approval to December's meeting minutes, the Cheylin Board of Education started 2009 with an afternoon lunch and the meeting following at 1 p.m.

The first order of business was appointing the seat vacated by Anita Pochop. It was an open forum in questioning the two candidates, Don Orten and Jim Cahoj.

Before the questioning started, motion carried to accept the resignation of Kendall Cahoj as high school volleyball coach.

As members questioned each candidate, it was clear the candidates wanted the same thing, to help in providing the best education possible and to make an impact on the students and staff. In addition, neither had outside agendas or interests that would conflict with their duties as board members.

Mr. Orten said he had experience with serving on the Century II Grant Committee, explaining that if the school were to apply for a grant, he would just excuse himself from the voting.

Mr. Cahoj said he was a foreman and had served on the bank board, church board and three years on the Champion, Neb., school board. One of his main concerns is in the area of sports.

The members voted four to two for the appointment of Don

Orten to the seat. Members asked Mr. Cahoj if he was considering running in the upcoming Board of Education election, he said that he was.

McDonald concession stand
April Hock, W Design Associates Consulting Engineers and Architects, brought the only bid submitted for the remodeling of the McDonald gym concession stand.

With the bid over \$150,000, the members proceeded to discuss at length the reason for such a high bid.

Ms. Hock showed the members the plans that previously had been approved, as the members looked over the blueprints, she continued with the list of remodeling projects such as new cabinets, electrical wiring, plumbing, etc.

When all was said concerning the remodeling and demolishes needed, the plans still did not cover the state fire marshal's requirements for safety.

Motion to reject TCC Corporation's bid of \$151,116, carried and the members agreed to regroup on the plans, go back and research the fire marshal's requirements that dealt with congested areas that block safe exiting if there was an emergency and the serving window at the concession stand.

Members discussed with Ms. Hock addressing the safety requirements first and then proceed with other remodeling as needed. She said the board can contact her company when they

are ready with new plans.

Safety plans and insurance

Once the motion to reject the concession stand bid, the members move quickly and carried the motion to authorize EFM Consulting to analyze and develop a hazard mitigation plan for USD 103 as part of the grant provided to Cheyenne County. The grant would cover cost of rebuilding after a natural disaster such as a tornado.

Also approved by the board was to accept the bid from J and M Construction of \$2,934.12 to install a steel door in the lower hall of the high school.

Superintendent Bill Porter told the members the steel door was to protect the student from flying broken glass that can occur during a tornado. He continued by saying that at the present, the students are not protected from the glass doors in the lower hall of the high school.

Motion to approve paying EMC Insurance an additional \$4,412 for property, liability and vehicle insurance for the 2008-2009 school year.

The previous insurance policy was revise to replacement costs and not value of the buildings. The policy covers all school buildings except the McDonald gymnasium and the deductible stayed at \$10,000.

The members concluded that a \$10,000 deductible was not much if replacing one building could cost several million dollars.

Superintendent reports

Superintendent Porter presented the members with job descriptions for teacher and staff positions. The members did not make any changes and Superintendent Porter will finalize for board's approval.

He reported he had talked to Kirby Krien, school computer technician, and the new Cheylin.com website would be up and running on Wednesday (yesterday). With the new website comes a link to the power school site, it eliminates the need for two separate sites.

The seniors made decisions for their trip, and will come to the next board meeting with the place, time and date.

Miscellaneous items

Other items the board acted on were:

- Set the date, Feb 12, at 6 p.m., for the staff appreciation dinner.
- Look over the negotiation letter submitted by Superintendent Porter to the teachers.
- Review the superintendent evaluation survey from the teachers.
- Review the letter Superintendent Porter is sending out to parents of students who were either going to another school or being home schooled. (See related story)
- Announce that four seats are up for election and the deadline to file is Jan. 27 and the election is April.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Cheylin Board will be Feb. 9.

'A Family Tradition' this year's fair theme

By Linda Schneider
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The first of the year has arrived and the Cheyenne County Fair Board are already discussing plans for the 2009 fair. "A Family Tradition" was selected as the theme.

In the October board meeting, Karol Lohman, board member, suggested the 4-H clubs have a contest in naming the fair's theme. The board members liked the idea and asked Joe Liebrandt, county extension agent, to contact the 4-H leaders.

Mr. Liebrandt submitted the suggested themes and the members voted without naming the club. While all the suggested themes were good, the board voted to accept "A Family Tradition" as the 2009 fair theme. The winning 4-H club, Pleasant Hill, won a pizza party.

The members also discussed some entertainment ideas for

the fair. Clay Zimbleman, member, suggested having a horse verses four-wheeler contests. The members thought it was a good idea to add to the schedule of events.

In addition, rules for the demolition derby were discussed based on making them similar to the surrounding area and their derby rules. It was agreed it would make it easier on the participants.

Gary Cooper, secretary, mentioned that with the theme "A Family Tradition," float ideas would be good. Mr. Bursch said that on several occasions people had asked why the fair board did not ride in the parade. Brian Hobbrock thought it was a legitimate request. The matter was tabled until the next meeting.

They also discussed adding a musical performance to the grandstand schedule.

Cheyenne County Hospital welcomes first baby of the year

By Karen Krien
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The first baby to be born in Cheyenne County arrived early Monday morning.

Amy Dianne Yanez, daughter of Viviana and Juan Yanez of St. Francis, was delivered by Dr. Rebecca Allard at 7:48 a.m. at the Cheyenne County Hospital in St. Francis. She weighed 8 pounds, 1 ounce and was 20-inches long.

She has a big sister, Vivian Nicole, 4, who was excited to welcome her new sister.

Her grandparents are Lourdez Martinez and Gustabo Alarcon, and Manuel Yanez and Ama Derma, all of Mexico.

The Yanez received: baby gift from Owens True Value, a gift basket from Hilltop General Store, a \$25 Busy Bee's B-E-E A Saver savings account from Bankwest, \$25 gift card from St. Francis Super's, a baby gift from Krien Pharmacy, a \$50 savings bond from Western State

Bank and a year's subscription to *The Saint Francis Herald* or *Bird City Times*. The Prairie Piecemakers Quilt Guild also gave a quilt to the new baby.

The rules for this year's first baby changed from year's past. The baby must be born at the Cheyenne County Hospital. With the arrival of Dr. Allard, the hospital began delivering babies. Last year, 14 babies were born at the hospital and, this year, 14 are already scheduled through the first week in August.

First baby born in 2008

Last year's first baby was Grace Anne, daughter of Jeff and Becca Landers. She was born at the Cheyenne County Hospital in St. Francis on Jan. 23. She weighed 6 pounds, 6 ounces.



AMY DIANNE YANEZ, first baby born in 2009 at the Cheyenne County Hospital, has her first picture taken with her family. Amy's mother Viviana, father Juan and big sister, Viviana Nicole

Times staff photo by Karen Krien

Jan. 27 last day to file

It is the year for state elections. Moreover, in Bird City, several seats are up for those who want to be a part of city or school decision making.

The deadline to file an application is at noon on Jan. 27, at the county clerk's office in St. Francis. A \$5 fee is required at the time of filing or the applicant can produce a petition with 10 or more signatures and the fee will be waived.

For the city council, the mayor seat and two council seats are up for election. For the Cheylin Board of Education, there are four seats.

County Clerk Terry Miller said if more than three candidates vie for one seat, there will be a Primary Election March 3; if not, the General Election will be April 7.