

Sheriff stays in city hall

By Linda Schneider
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Since the December Bird City Council meeting, there have been objections about moving the sheriff's office out of the city hall building. A special meeting was held on Jan. 13 and the sheriff will remain in the building.

In the December council meeting, council members approved to accept a \$4,000 grant from Bird City Century II Development Foundation to construct space for the sheriff office in the city shop, furthermore Bird City would pay the finishing construction. In addition, the Small Business Outreach Center proposed by Century II would locate in city hall. Before the January council meeting, the subject became a hotbed of discussion for many residents.

Prior to the December meeting, council members had discussed with Sheriff Craig Van Allen the option of moving the sheriff's office to another suitable location, if it met all the requirements. Sheriff Van Allen said he was not opposed, if all security and safety standards were met.

However, several Bird City residents attended the regular January monthly meeting and expressed concerns over the total cost of the construction. In addition, there was new information about building codes and requirements needed to build the sheriff office. Council members agreed to research the concerns and have a special meeting.

On Jan. 13, the Bird City City Council held a special meeting to discuss the issue of the location of the sheriff's office because new information concerning the state and federal specifications required to construct the sheriff office would exceed the amount of the grant and the cost could be passed to residents in the form of higher taxes.

The city hall conference room was standing room only as Mayor Troy Burr opened the discussion with Ned Smith, Century II board member, reading a letter from Century II Development Foundation.

In the letter, Century II thanked the city council for working in partnership with the Foundation on several community projects in the last few years, more recently the Small Business Outreach Center.

Mr. Smith read on saying that in view of the requirements needed for the construction of the sheriff's office in the city shop, Century II withdrew its request to use the office space in city hall. In addition, he asked that if the city hall did not meet with the required specifications for the sheriff's office, Century II would like the business center to be considered again.

On a personal note, Mr. Smith added that in the last five years Century II has granted \$226,711 to city improvements that would have had to been raised through taxes.

"I want to say thanks to Century II for all the things they have provided for Bird City," said Mayor Burr.

Mayor Burr turned the meeting over to Councilman Frank Serrano, president, who had asked for the special meeting.

Councilman Serrano said the reason he asked for the special meeting was to preserve the grandfather clause for the sheriff's office to be in the city hall. Adding, if too much time lapsed and the clause was lost, any construction required would be costly due to the new building codes, as well as state and federal specifications.

"We needed to be aware of all the information that is needed to insure the sheriff had a proper office," said Councilman Serrano.

He continued explaining that if a new sheriff's office was built, it would require an architecture to design it with all the new specifications needed.

Mayor Burr asked him what did the sheriff need to be able to operate in the city hall office space? Councilman Serrano said it is currently acceptable and because of the grandfather clause, are able to occupy the office without major changes. He added the hallway is acceptable to use for testing suspects under the influence of alcohol, and there is a small room that can be locked to secure evidence.

"The office meets with Sheriff Van Allen's needs, it may not be 100-percent ideal, but it is acceptable," he said.

In keeping with meeting requirements, motions carried to resend moving the sheriff's office to the city shop and accepting Century II's \$4,000 grant for construction in city shop.

Motion carried to keep the sheriff's office in city hall. All motions were unanimous.

The council asked for comments from the public. Mary Anderson a Bird City resident, said that the council should continue to search for a building for the Small Business Center to help Century II out.

Councilman Dennis Wright said, "Actually, Brock Ketzner, who owns the building down on the highway, is open to letting the business center use it."

Mayor Burr added there are a couple of options that are being investigated. There was no further discussion and the meeting was adjourned.

Reducing pesticide use topic of study

A new pilot project under the 'Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food' initiative for farmers to establish high tunnels...also known as hoop houses...to increase the availability of locally grown produce in a conservation-friendly way, has been announced by Kathleen Merrigan, Agriculture Deputy Secretary.

Kansas is one of 38 states in the 3-year pilot study that will help determine if high tunnels are effective in reducing pesticide use, keeping vital nutrients in the soil, extending the growing season, increasing yields, and providing other benefits to growers.

"This is a great opportunity for organic farmers or farmers transitioning to organic," said Eric Banks, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist, Salina. Natural Resources Conservation Service will administer the program.

"In Kansas, the high tunnels practice will be available in qualifying Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications through the Organic Initiative," said Banks. "For accepted applications, Natural Resources Conservation Service will limit the practice to one high tunnel per farm."

Organic producers, or those transitioning to organic, interested in the establishment of a high tunnel should stop at their local conservation service field office and visit with the staff about addressing resource concerns on organic systems and submitting an application for the Organic Initiative through Environmental Quality Incentives Program. A cutoff date will be set in the near future for organic applications in Kansas.

High tunnels are made of ribs of plastic or metal pipe covered with a layer of plastic sheeting, easy to build, maintain, and move. High tunnels are used year-round in parts of the country, providing steady incomes to farmers - a significant advantage to owners of small farms, limited-resource farmers, and organic producers.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service office is located at your local U.S. Department of Agriculture Service Center (listed in the telephone book under United States Government or on the Internet at offices.usda.gov).

More information about Natural Resources Conservation Service is available at the Web site: www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov.



LEARNING ABOUT ECONOMICS was never so much fun. Mitchell Howard (l to r), Melinda Daily, extension office agent, Cheylin Superintendent Bruce Bolen, and Dylan Ketzner make Play doh pizzas to learn how products are made for public use.

Times staff photo by Linda Schneider

Students learn about economics

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Last week, Sharon Hendricks kindergarten class received several lessons in "Play doh Economics." This is a hands-on exercise presented by the Sunflower Extension District 6 with the funds provided by Kansas State Research and Extension.

Melinda Daily, family and consumer sciences district extension agent, showed students opportunities to learn the different

resources that are available and how to use them.

Beginning with identifying various public occupations from pictures, Mrs. Daily was able to open the doors for discussions on what human, capital and natural resources were.

Mrs. Daily asked questions like, "What service does a dentist provide and how do you know?" to engage in lively conversation. Dylan Ketzner said he knew that dentists work on teeth be-

cause he had a tooth filling.

Then the students were given Playdoh to make something that would show a service. Mrs. Daily explained that Play doh is a natural resource because it is made out of natural substances. It wasn't long before the students were busy making cookies, pancakes and lots of pizzas.

Mrs. Daily told the students when they use their hands, they were demonstrating human resources. Then she moved on to ask-

ing them to use rulers, cup lids and scissors to help them learn about capital resources.

Mrs. Hendricks said teaching kindergarten students about economics is one of the state requirements schools must provide, and the Playdoh Economics presentation is fun as well as hands-on learning experience.

"And it is good to have someone other than the teacher to talk with the students," said Mrs. Hendricks.



DURING THE WORKSHOP parents, Martin Estrada (l to r), Carmen Gutierrez, Clara Solis and Leticia Estrada learn how to select and provide a study area for their children. Emily Bolen, migrant director (front right), helps with the power point slideshow.

Times staff photo by Linda Schneider

Parents learn how to design study area

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On Monday evening, Cheylin School hosted the second in a seven-part workshop on how parents can learn to make their home an educational castle for their child.

Several parents attended the workshop led by Margyre Antholz, title one teacher, and along with Blanca Ponce, translator, they presented an hour-long instructional session on how to design a study area that can improve learning as well as provide a stable environment for emotional and physical support for their child while they study.

Mrs. Antholz told the parents that location of the study area is as important as how they study and when. There should be no distractions such as being a low traffic location, not near television or even the refrigerator.

One of the topics that was covered was television and its impact on children. According to the American Psychiatric Associa-

tion, before children complete elementary school, they will have watched 8,000 to 10,000 episodes of television violence. In addition, kids will watch television 11 times more than they will have conversations with their parents.

Furthermore, American households have on the average three televisions in their home and two-thirds of children over the age of eight years have one in their bedroom. So, it is reasonable to believe removing the television from the study area is important.

Television can also affect children's reading, and lead to lazy thinking and behavior in the classroom.

Mrs. Antholz spent time explaining how important it was to set up rules for watching television, as well as setting viewing time limits and monitoring what was being watched.

Parents went home with handouts to review at home. The next workshop is scheduled for March.



MARGYRE ANTHOLZ (r), presents the workshop lesson and Blanca Ponce assists by translating for Spanish speaking parents.

Times staff photo by Linda Schneider