

## Teachers attend meeting to share information

The February meeting for the Cheylin Board of Education began with a report from Jan Busse, board member, on the January Board of Education luncheon with staff members and continued with discussions on goals, donations and beginning drafts on the 2010-2011 school year calendar.

Visitors were Kayla Bursch, first grade teacher, and Cristi Antholz, fifth grade teacher. Both had attended the Reading Academy program and wanted to share some information to what the program offered and how it will be applied in the classroom.

There will be a recognition ceremony for students between the varsity boys' and girls' basketball games on Friday in the McDonald gymnasium. Due to Naomi Reeh's illness, the board moved her formal commendation to the Western Kansas Liberty League Academic team to next meeting.

### Board of education staff luncheon

Mrs. Busse reported that the luncheon with faculty staff members, Ken Hankins, third grade teacher, Carol Patch, special education, Mrs. Bursch, and Kevin Dixon, high school math, went well.

She said that in addition to liking the after-school program, Mr. Hankins said that he appreciated the fact that Superintendent Bruce Bolen had not asked for a raise and that he felt the support of the administration.

Mrs. Busse added that on the subject of Power School, one teacher was not satisfied and three teachers liked the program. Discussion followed about some of the issues that may be causing concerns.

Other issues discussed was salary and the board wanted Superintendent Bolen to clarify to the community the positive contributions the Bird City Dairy had made by drawing families into the area and into Cheylin Schools.

For the February luncheon, attendees will be Tammi Carmichael, Blanca Ponce, Emily Bolen and Margyrene Antholz.

### School Fair Funding

Several school districts throughout Kansas have joined together with Schools for Fair Funding organization to fund legal challenge to change the laws concerning the funding cuts that have recently happened to schools and to possibly stop them in the future.

The members approved to pay \$143.55 to continue to support Schools for Fair Funding in continuing their efforts to change the school funding laws.

### School goals

Members approved the 2009-2010 education goals that includes the board of education's support on many important concerns of the community and school.

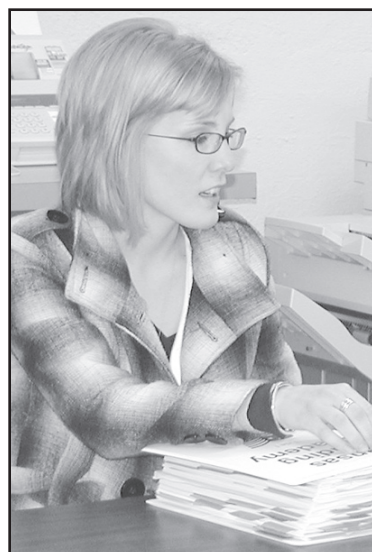
The board will support hiring and maintaining a quality and effective staff to insure the academic success of Cheylin students in post-secondary education and/or post-high school vocations. They will continue to develop long-range financial planning to maintain the future viability of Cheylin.

In addition, the members will actively communicate with legislators the needs concerning maintaining effective schools, both as a board and individually, and through encouragement of patrons to communicate with their legislators.

Cheylin coaches, staff, students and patrons are expected to uphold a high standard of sportsmanship. Furthermore, staff, student, administration and the board are expected to give proper attention to maintaining any and all district facilities in keeping with community expectations.

The board is committed to improving technology support and development of a system to inventory computer hardware, software and software licenses. In addition, they will cultivate open communication between themselves, administration, staff, site council and patrons.

The members will work to continue expansion, support and evaluation of the kindergarten through 12 grades technology curriculum, and actively pursue agreements with neighboring districts to share re-



KAYLA BURSCH shares ideas with members.

sources where possible.

### Reading Academy

Ms. Antholz and Mrs. Bursch, teaching staff, told about the Reading Academy.

Both teachers expressed appreciation for the opportunity to attend this worthwhile program and hope that other teachers will be able to attend in the future.

They traveled to Lawrence to attend the 3-day event and learned many new educational strategies that will help them and other teachers in the classrooms.

"Teachers like to share new learning techniques and information," said Ms. Antholz.

Mrs. Bursch said she has had a lot of fun with her first graders learning new ways to build vocabulary, everyday students are eager to learn and use the word of the day.

She added that she learned that she cannot assume that the students are all learning on the same level and there are students who can help other students learn.

Superintendent Bolen added that it is this type of funding that may have to be cut from schools, and it is discouraging because they are essential in teachers being up-to-date on learning techniques.

### Computer donations

The board accepted the donation of computer equipment from the National Weather Service in Goodland.

The donations were many and included computer towers, printers, color laser printers, and multi-media monitors, plus many other items. A thank you letter is being sent.

### School business

Superintendent Bolen reported that Ameritowne which had been discussed last July and was scheduled for this spring, had to be put on hold due to many unforeseen events. It is scheduled to continue next fall.

The Exemplary Student Recognition ceremony will be on the Friday high school basketball game in McDonald. The event will take place between the boys' and girls' varsity games at approximately 7:20 p.m. It is to give honor to the students who did well on their state assessment tests.

"I would like for some of the board members to be on hand to congratulate these students," Superintendent Bolen said. "The Cheylin Booster Club has made up some T-shirts especially for them. It is to make it a special day."

### Miscellaneous items

The members have begun drafting the 2010-2011 school year calendar.

Extending kindergarten to four days a week was discussed and decided to keep the three day week, their decision was based on funding.

Lori Janicke and Jan Busse were appointed to the School Calendar Committee.

Budget was briefly discussed, staff and school funding cuts are in the future. (see Superintendent Bolen's column)

### Executive session

Executive session was called for non-elective personnel. Upon reconvening, no action was taken.

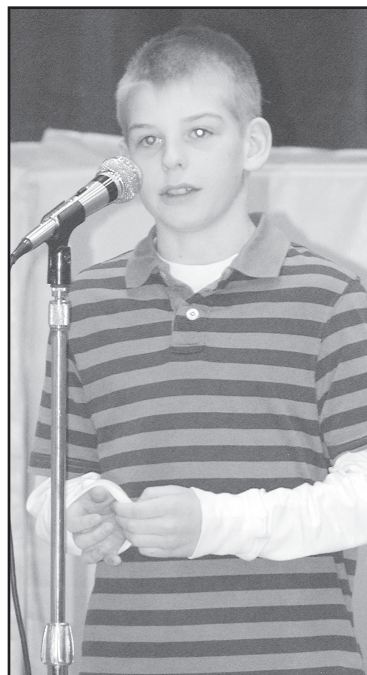
Next meeting

Next meeting is March 15.



LYNETTE KOON (l) AND IRVIN SCHWARZ of the Northwest Kansas Regional Recycling Organization help Brad Schneider, Bird City superintendent, and Eric Bartels, Bird City maintenance, load electronic equipment for disposal and are part of the e-waste program to assist counties either dispose or recycle electrical items. For now, the service is free to residents, schools and government entities, businesses have to pay. After Sept. 10, everyone will have to pay a fee.

Times staff photo by Linda Schneider



RACHEL KELTZ (l) AND DEVON JANICKE take turns during the spelling bee in St. Francis.

## Students participate in spelling bee

By Karen Krien

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The Cheyenne County Spelling Bee was held Wednesday, Feb. 3, with students from Cheylin and St. Francis, fourth through eighth grades, competing. After six rounds, there were two boys left.

Austin Patton, a sixth grader from St. Francis, correctly spelling "hysterically" to win the 2010 spelling bee. Coming in second place was Eric Hart, St. Francis eighth grader. Eric misspelled "apprentice."

The rule for the final round was that, if the last contestants misspelled a word, then the final contestant must spell an additional word right.

Some of the words students were asked to spell included: significant, condemn, mildew, diamond, towel, dangerous, commentary, denominator, surround, strengthen, accurate, apologize, pharmacy, agriculture, enormous

and centipede.

Students participating were:

Cheylin: fourth grade-Alex Hazuka, Rachel Keltz and Jordan Janicke; fifth grade-Haleigh Rucker, Ariais Castillo and Tommy Frisbie; sixth grade-Devon Janicke, Pedro Gutierrez and Elizabeth Keltz; seventh grade-Cheyenne Hewitt, Allie Frisbie and Anamarie Crespini; eighth grade-Lois Solis, Walker Janicke and Shayla Hubbard. Alternates were Amber Manners, C.J. Antholz, Kelsey Miller, Jaime Davison and Ellie Pochop.

St. Francis: fourth grade-Tate Busse, Madison Tice and Zoe Sundstrum; fifth grade-Makayla Rogers, Joel Hill and Quinton Cravens; sixth grade-Jude Faulkender, Austin Patton and Jakob Church; seventh grade-MaKayla Taylor, Aby Fernandez and Jon Hoard; eighth grade-Derek Queen, Eric Hart and Scott Warren.

## Legislators plan to meet in Bird City

By Karen Krien

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Cheyenne County residents are urged to be at the Bird City American Legion hall at 8 a.m. on Saturday to hear what Kansas State Senator Ralph Ostmeyer, and John Faber, Kansas Representative, will have to say at their town hall meeting.

While they will be seeking ideas on issues being addressed in the 2010 Kansas Legislature, there are three specific questions that have been sent to the representatives to answer.

They include:

- Kansas is facing a \$400 million shortfall. What is your plan as an elected official to address this situation?
- How do you expect local

services, schools, hospitals, nursing home to survive?

A 1-cent sales tax increase would generate substantial revenue by many; funding the cuts locally would put the short-fall on few, especially in western Kansas. Which of these are you more likely to support?

Everyone is invited to attend. The Cheyenne County Farm Bureau will be furnishing donuts and coffee.

Later that day, they will be in Atwood from 9:45 to 10:45 at Williams Brothers Grocery Store. From 11:30 to 1 p.m., they will be at the Decatur County Courthouse in Oberlin, then on to Norton for a 1:45 to 2:45 meeting at the Town and Country Kitchen.

## Budget should be top priority

By Bruce Bolen  
Cheylin Superintendent

The Kansas Legislature is in session through May, and deciding whether to raise taxes or cut spending to resolve the budget shortfall is their top priority.

You may have read articles published by the Kansas Policy Institute, saying public schools are holding large cash reserves that should be spent on educating students. The funds the Kansas Policy Institute refers to are bond and interest, capital outlay, and contingency reserve funds. Yes, we do maintain cash reserves to operate our school. Considering the state has not made a school payment on time since October 2009, thank goodness USD 103 had the cash reserves necessary to make payroll and pay bills.

Currently the Kansas Legislature has three options: no tax increase by cutting budgets, raising taxes, or a combination of both options to solve the \$483 million budget shortfall. Some representatives are promoting taxing locally over the state raising taxes.

I want to explain the reality of what no tax increase will do to our schools if this option is chosen by the legislature. I am assuming the state education budget will take 52 percent of the funding cut since education spending represents 52 percent of the general fund budget.

Dale Dennis, deputy commissioner of education, states this would result in a funding decrease of approximately \$286 in base state aid per pupil (BSAPP). USD 103 receives approximately 2.66 base state aid per pupil for every student on the Sept. 20 count day. The 2.66 factor represents all school weightings that our district receives in funding. To compute the cut, take  $286 \times (2.66) \times 137$  student head count = \$104,224 reduction in the general fund budget.

If staff reductions are enacted to cover this type of funding loss, our schools will face the closing of elective programs like music, vocational programs, drivers education, possibly reduce athletic offerings, reduce coaching positions, and reduce classified staff (para-educators, custodial, food service, transportation, and secretarial) and/or certified staff.

I am estimating that a minimum of three jobs will have to be cut from USD 103 along with possible assistant coaching positions. These cuts are going to hurt our students, the quality of our school, and the opportunities for students. These decisions will also hurt our community's economic development, local retail businesses as well as our community's quality of life.

Across the state, Mr. Dennis stated Kansas will lose an estimated 5,095 educational jobs based upon superintendent surveys.

The USD 103 Board of Education will have similar decisions as

the Kansas Legislature. They can cut programs, raise local taxes or a combination of both options. Currently the USD 103 Local Option Budget is at 30 percent, which is the legal maximum limit. Your board over the years has been conservative in using their supplemental general fund money only when necessary. The USD 103 Board of Education needs your input as to how best resolve our local funding issues.

Likewise, our state legislators need your input to solve the current budget crisis. If taxes are going to be raised, why not look to solve the problem at the state level and not to all the local taxing entities in our community.

Some state legislators are advocating putting the taxing decision back on local communities in lieu of raising state taxes. This is going to create general inequality in all local Kansas schools and communities.

Raising the cap on Local Option Budgets is being proposed by urban legislators where small mill levy increases generate considerable tax dollars. We are concerned that we are faced with creating "have and have not" schools and communities throughout our state.

If just 10 people a week over the course of the legislative session mid-January through May express their concerns and solutions for the budget crisis to Representative John Faber and Senator Ralph Ostmeyer we can preserve our community and our schools.

No one enjoys raising revenues but when sustaining our communities, schools, and essential services are in the balance, we will need to encourage our state representatives to make difficult decisions that are in our best interest.

Hand written letters from local tax paying voters stating your views carries the highest impact of any lobbying effort. Take a moment and write your state legislators and make your thoughts heard in Topeka.

I strongly encourage you to attend the Town Hall meeting this Saturday at 8 a.m. in the Bird City American Legion Hall with Senator Ostmeyer and Representative Faber. We need to fill the hall; the future of our school and community is at stake!

Their contact information is as follows:

Kansas State Senate  
Ralph Ostmeyer - R-Grinnell - ralph.ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov - 785-296-7399

Kansas House of Representatives

John Faber - R-Brewster - john.faber@house.ks.gov - 785-296-7500 - represents Rawlins, Cheyenne, Decatur, Norton and Phillips counties

Notice: Much of the information for this article was taken from an article written by Mark Bejot, superintendent of WaKeene Schools.