

Full Circle Aging Expo celebrates spring

The Full Circle...An Aging Expo Planning Committee is making a change.

Because of weather and time concerns in the fall, the committee will move this year's expo to spring in the hopes of more daylight hours for traveling and less threat of poor weather conditions.

To celebrate the move to spring, the planning committee wishes to announce that the next Full Circle...An Aging Expo, will be held Friday, April 23, at the Colby United Methodist Church from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The expo is sponsored by K-State Research and Extension - North West Area and Northwest Kansas Area Agency on Aging.

Pre-registration information is available at any Northwest Kansas County or District Extension Office

by calling the area extension office at 785-462-6281 and ask for Libby or Becky. Pre-registrations are due Thursday, April 15, to receive an early bird reduction in price. However, walk ins will be accepted at the door with no guarantee of lunch.

For those needing continuing education units should contact the area extension office at the number above so that arrangements can be made to get the units.

Dr. Tana Goering, MD and KSN television personality, will be back by popular demand as the key note speaker. She will, however, be changing her discussion to "How do you know when a trip to the doctor is necessary?"

Some other speakers will remain the same, but there will also be new

topics to help with answering your questions about aging. Some of the new topics include Mindbody Exercises by Tina Harris, Physical Therapist. Tina will explain exercise for strength, flexibility, posture and balance. A representative of the office of Kansas Securities Commission, Beth Victor, will discuss making investments, what you need to know to make those investments, and learning how to avoid being a victim since seniors are targets for fraud. SHICK Counselor and district extension agent, Connie Bretz, will be discussing getting extra help paying for your prescription drugs.

By request some topics are the same, so if you missed one of your favorite topics at the last expo, you have a chance to hear

them once again. These topics include Elder Law by Randy Clinkscales, P.A.; Vitamin D by Glen McNeil, R.D. from Fort Hays State University, Mind Aerobics by Kathy Sikes, Alzheimer's Association, Enjoying Beautiful Eye Health by a Vision Source Representative; When a Loved One Passes by Marilyn Cooper, LMSW; Drug Interaction by Mike Larmer, Pharmacist and Affordable Kansas Travel by Jennifer Haugh, Travel/Tourism, Kansas Department of Commerce.

For further information on Full Circle...An Aging Expo, contact the local K-State Research and Extension Office, the Northwest Area Extension Office at 785-462-6281 or e-mail Tranda Watts at twatts@ksu.edu .



THE OLD MAN of the FFA work auction was none other than Max Keltz, FFA leader. He was auctioned off to the highest bidder, Denise Keltz, who has busy plans for him.

Letters to the Editor

State deficit threatens Medicare support

St. Francis Good Samaritan Village plays an important role in the life of our community. Not only is the Village the only long-term care facility in Cheyenne County, but it is also a major contributor to our county's economy.

The Village employs over 60 staff with an annual payroll of \$1.5 million paid out in 2009. I would like to emphasize that state Medicaid funding is not the icing on the cake. It is the primary source of revenue which enables the Village to continue its operations.

Because of the growing deficit in the Kansas state budget, Governor Parkinson issued a directive in late 2009 to freeze Medicaid capitation rates and to reduce actual Medicaid payments to long-term care providers by 10 percent, effective Jan. 1.

To compensate for the reduction in Medicaid revenues, the Village has reduced budgeted non-nursing work hours, has reduced variable expenses, and has increased charges on non-Medicaid revenue sources (mainly private pay) to compensate for the Medicaid shortfall. The Medicaid reduction has also affected the subsidy to the Village kitchen to Meals on Wheels for seniors in our community.

The agencies that the Village is most linked to, aside from the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, are: 1) the Kansas Department on Aging which channels Medicaid funds and conducts inspections, and 2) the Kansas Association for Homes and Services for the Aging, an advocate agency for non-profit long-term care providers.

The Department on Aging provides oversight for 21,379 nursing home beds in 316 facilities in Kansas. Half of these facilities are not-for-profit, including the St. Francis Village and the 16 other

Good Samaritan Villages in Kansas. The department is projecting an overall reduction of \$24 million in 2010 from the original Nursing Facility budget line.

Meanwhile, Kansas Association for Homes and Services is actively lobbying for long-term care interests before the final budget vote in Topeka. The legislature is considering or has passed a number of revenue collection measures. These include additional taxation on alcohol, cigarettes, and the sugar in soda pop.

As for levying a 1-percent increase in state sales tax, House Bill 2473 calling for a 1-percent state sales tax increase was curiously removed from the House docket. A Wichita television station polled voter sentiment on this issue, and 55 percent were in favor and 40 percent were opposed to a 1-percent sales tax increase.

Shouldn't conservative fiscal policy be in favor of balancing revenues with expenses, not simply against taxation at any cost?

To add to the injury, the state legislature is working on the idea of a "Nursing Home Provider Tax" which is a daily tax on each nursing home bed. Kansas Association for Homes and Services is opposed to this concept, advocating that the legislature has a responsibility to come up with a broad-based system to deal with the state's fiscal crisis, and not pick out nursing homes to come up with the money to get matching federal money. The proposed tax is \$4 per bed per day. At the St. Francis Village, that would amount to \$73,000 per year. A regressive bed tax is regressive public policy!

What the general public doesn't realize, is that for every \$100 the

state has cut out of Medicaid, we have lost \$233 in 30/70 federal matching Medicaid contribution. Anybody with a connection to long-term care should take the time to connect to Sen. Ralph

Ostmeyer and Rep. John Faber to urge the restoration of Medicaid entitlements for our seniors.

Jeffrey Paulsen, administrator
St. Francis
Good Samaritan Village

House to vote on school bill

Dear Editor:

On Monday morning, I sat in on a conference call with Dale Dennis, who is the Deputy Commissioner of Education for the Kansas State Department of Education. The call was intended for superintendents across the state and its purpose was to explain House Bill 2739 which is currently being recommended by House Leadership. This bill will likely be voted on by the House late this week or sometime next week.

I will try to explain this in terms so that someone without a school finance background can understand; I have a decent background concerning school finance, but I find the details of this bill very confusing.

In short, if HB 2739 should pass, it would cut our schools an estimated \$69,287 AND increase the local mill levy by an estimated 9.52 mills. That is not a misprint. Our budget would go down and our local mill levy would go up--significantly. In addition, the legislature would raise the base state aid per pupil to \$4,450 (from the current \$4,012) but decrease weighting formulas which schools get for various reasons such as low enrollment, at-risk students, and

vocational education to make up the difference in the increased base state aid per pupil.

In simple terms, the legislature will make it look like they are increasing funding but in reality, they will be decreasing funding and forcing us to raise our local mill levy at the same time.

The only answer we can get about why the legislature is so opposed to an increase in sales tax statewide is that the economy is too fragile for a tax increase at this time. However, for schools to maintain what we currently have, the legislature is allowing us to locally raise property taxes which, in turn, gives communities local control as to what their schools will or will not have. Maybe some will buy that excuse, but I don't.

In my opinion, any member of the legislature that votes for this bill should be removed from office by their constituents at the next election. Those that vote for this bill are devastating our schools and our communities.

Rob Schiltz
USD 297
St. Francis Schools
Superintendent

Letter to the Editor

Relay for Life needs leaders

Letter to the Editor

Have you or someone near and dear to you had cancer? Have you attended a Relay for Life event? It is so great to see how much the Survivor Walk and the luminary lighting mean to cancer survivors and their friends and family. It is also a wonderful way to remember those who lost their fight with this dreadful disease. Most people who have been touched by cancer and who have participated in Relay want to go again the next year.

Now for the bad news. Unless people step up and become involved, Relay for Life will not happen again in Cheyenne County. Most of those who have been involved for the last decade have had life changes and have decided that they can no longer be in charge.

Please help to keep this tradition alive! The date is flexible, the

hours of the Relay are flexible (It does not have to last all night) and the schedule for the evening can be changed.

Relay proceeds go to the American Cancer Society, which offers assistance and information to citizens of Cheyenne County. They fund a great deal of cancer research that helps all of us. American Cancer Society depends on people like you for their financial support, and events like Relay are a big part of it.

Contact: Kim Peach
American Cancer Society
Community Manager, Income Development
210 W. 12th LaCrosse, KS 67548

Phone/fax: 785-222-3327
Cell phone: 785-639-3603
kim.peach@cancer.org

A world with less cancer, is a world with more Birthdays.

THE CLOCK IS TICKING!
Sherry Schultz
St. Francis

Residents doing well recycling

By Karen Krien
karen.k@nwkansas.com
Cheyenne County residents are doing well at recycling was the words heard at the Monday, March 15, county commissioners' meeting.

Roger Jensen, county representative to the Northwest Kansas Regional Recycling Board, reported that in 2009, the county had brought in 112.9 tons of recyclables which included newspapers, cardboard, office, junk, chipboard, books, magazines, plastic, aluminum cans, tin cans and glass. They had also used the opportunity and brought in e-waste, totaling 122.2 tons.

The Northwest Kansas Regional Recycling Service includes eight counties: Cheyenne, Decatur, Gove, Logan, Rawlins, Scott, Sheridan and Thomas counties. The eight counties also participate in the e-waste collection.

The commissioners and Mr. Jensen talked about how good the county is doing collecting cardboard. There are some businesses that need to be recycling, they said.

The county reimburses the center of \$10 per ton. Last year, the county paid a total of \$1,129. (\$1,009 (St. Francis) and \$120 (Bird City).

According to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Cheyenne County residents had generated 612 tons of trash and had recycled 112.9 tons.

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Benvenuto!
Burrows Vision Clinic would like to invite you to our Frame and Style Shows!

"Taste of Italy"

March 29th from 11 a.m. - 3 MT
❖ Benkelman — Rayban, D&G, Ralph Lauren

March 30th from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. CT
❖ McCook — Fendi, Tres Jolie, Nike

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Please join us to wish **Carol Gamblin** best of luck on her retirement!



Open House
Saturday, March 31 — 1 - 3 p.m.
Cheyenne County Courthouse
(Commissioner's Room)