

Bricklayers compete for national championship

The 2011 Spec Mix Bricklayer 500 National bricklaying championship was held at the Las Vegas Convention Center on January 19. Bricklayers came from Ohio, California, Wisconsin, Iowa, Utah, Kentucky, Colorado, Illinois, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Florida, North Carolina, the Canadian provinces of Manitoba, & Ontario, and London, England to compete. Of the 20 bricklayers competing 11 winners from regional bricklayer events held during 2010 throughout the US and Canada are among the 20 contestants. Garrett Hood from North Dakota last years Spec Mix Bricklayer 500 champion and Joe Vanek from Illinois last years Craftsmanship Award winner returned to defend there titles.

The Spec Mix Bricklayer 500 has the largest winners purse of any masonry competition handing out approximately \$100,000 in gifts and prizes including a 2011 FORD F-250 4x4 XLT truck which is awarded to the mason laying the most brick. The top Spec Mix Craftsman receives the highest money amount.

Each mason is required to meet the quality standards of the event as they build a 25 foot 8 inch, double wythe brick wall. Competition has 4 awards: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, place are based on the highest net brick count after subtracting for any quality variations. The 4th award and highest coveted is the Spec Mix 500 Craftsman issued to the mason with over 500 brick total qualifying brick. There wall needs to be a sellable wall and no allowances for error are allowed. Judges for this competition consist of 22 journeymen level bricklayers and masonry instructors from across the country. One of these judges was from Kansas.

Each brick mason brings there own tender who also competes to see who can set up the bricklayers station as quickly and accurately as they can to meet outlined specifications. The tender with the fastest time is awarded \$2,500 and the title of Spec Mix Toughest Tender. The first place winners tender Lynette Darby was recognized as being the first female to compete in the Spec Mix 500.

This years winners of the Spec Mix Bricklayer 500 were: First place, Ray Robinson from Gainesville Florida for laying 697 brick in one hour, 2nd, place went to Jeff Burton from Ohio for laying 671 brick. Burtons tender



DALE MARTINEZ spreading mud on the last course of 25 foot by 8 inch double wythe wall. Photo by Norma Martinez

Raymond Burton won the Spec Mix Toughest Tender award. Dave Moyle from Wadena, Iowa won 3rd, place for the Spec Mix Bricklayer 500 and the title of the Spec Mix Top Craftsman award for laying 625 perfect brick.

Ray and Norma Martinez's 51 yr. old son Dale Martinez was among the 20 contestants. Last year during the regional's he qualified as being twelfth best in Nationals and this year he qualified as first in Regional's.

As a teenager Dale spent his summers carrying hod for his father and started laying

brick after he graduated from High School. He works on both residential and commercial jobs, supervised and worked on the brick, block and brick tile work at Denver International Airport, and Coors Field. Just last year his boss Jim Serowski with JVS Masonry sent him and his crew to Colby to do an addition on a church.

This year was Dales second time to compete in the Spec Mix 500. In 2009 he was the first in Colorado competition to take both the Best Bricklayer and Craftsman awards for laying the most brick

and putting up a perfect sellable wall in 1 hours time. Rules then were 100 brick was deducted for each error made. Dale's wall was 1/8 inch off on one corner which put him below the 500 count laid to qualify. This year he only went for the Craftsman award and laid 561 brick, but had 1 bed joint that was off from the specified width. He knew he had made this error, but could not correct it once it was made. Next year he says will be much better for him as he will be more careful not to leave room for errors, also the rule applies; third time is charm.



County to celebrate Kansas Day

Kansas Day activities in Bird City are set for Saturday with registration starting at 10 a.m. at the Bird City Legion hall.

Elected officers make the plans for the Kansas Day activities. Local churches rotate responsibilities for kitchen duties and table decorations. The celebration begins with registration, followed by a potluck at noon.

Cheyenne County will continue its Kansas Day tradition celebrating the "Kansas Sesquicentennial." The St. Francis Singers and Swingin' Seniors will provide entertainment. William Keel, professor of German and chair of the department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Kansas, will speak on "The German Heritage of Kansas."

Not many communities in Kansas observe Kansas Day, so everyone is urged to come to Bird City this year and join the celebration of Kansas' 150th birthday.

Cheyenne County has celebrated

Kansas Day since 1930. The Mother's Circle of the Bird City Methodist Church organized the first celebration, a "Kansas Day Picnic" which turned into an all day affair.

Again in 1931 the Bird City community celebrated Kansas Day with skits, dances, poems and songs. Year by year the Kansas Day celebration grew in popularity.

In 1935, a set of by-laws was accepted by the Kansas Day organization. The object was to promote and maintain the proper observance of Kansas Day in Cheyenne County.

On Jan. 29, 1958, a blizzard struck Cheyenne County. This is the only time residents did not gather for the Kansas Day celebration. In 1971 the observance was moved to the Bird City Legion hall. Kansas Day activities are still held there.

Note: Historical information was gathered from Cheyenne County History, Volume I, 1987 "Kansas Day Celebration" by Marsha Magley.

Awards presented Monday evening

By Karen Krien
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Four conservation awards will be presented on Monday at the annual meeting of the Cheyenne County Conservation District. This year's winners of the Banker's Awards are Troy and Cindy Burr, Soil Conservation; Jim and Edie Walters, Windbreak; and Ken and Barb Beougher, Water Conservation. Jim and Jeanne Dunn were the winners of the Cheyenne County Grassland Award.

The awards meeting will start with dinner at 6:30 p.m. at the

American Legion hall in Bird City.

A full report of the Cheyenne County Conservation District's activities and financial affairs will be made. The terms of two board members, Spencer Schlepp and Clint Bursch, are expiring. An election will be held.

The winners of the conservation posters will also be announced.

Be sure and check the conservation special section inserted in this issue of *The Saint Francis Herald* and *Bird City Times*. It includes stories about the winners and is brought to readers by the advertisers.

Pheasant season comes to a close

As the pheasant hunting season draws to a close, there have been number of hunters hitting the field in search of the birds.

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks states that late-season hunting is a great time to go afield; hunting spots are uncrowded and weather may cause birds to hold in heavier cover, making dogs a real asset.

Since the crops have been cut the birds are more apt to bunch up in the draws and thick grass. The weather has been cold and the light snows should make it easier to lure the birds out.

Doug Flemming, Bird City, and his son, Drew, St. Francis, were walking the fields with their group of hunters on Jan. 15. The weather was cold and windy and not as successful as

last year when everyone in the bunch got their limit. With two dogs, Dutch, belonging to Doug, and Lucy, belonging to Jeff Redding from Conifer, Colo., the group of seven hunters brought down 10 pheasants.

Others in the group that has been hunting together every year for over 15 years were: Tom Saunders from Littleton, Colo., and Rick Vawter and Steve Meggison, both from Topeka. Jeff's 13-year-old son Logan has accompanied the group ever since he was old enough to walk the fields with his dad.

Driving down the country roads shows there are still plenty of pheasants out there and there is still five days left to get your guns and get them!



DREW FLEMMING with his dog Dutch are out looking for pheasants.

Times staff photos by Norma Martinez.



GETTING READY FOR THE HUNT — Pictured is (l to r) Jeff Vawter, Logan Redding, Steve Meggison, Lucy, Jeff Redding and Tom Sanders

