



WORK HAS STARTED on the new wellness center. Pictured getting ready to work are student volunteers, Connor Hazuka, Jeremiah White, Josh Keltz, Noah Jones, Ty Carmichael and Casey Vandike. Also helping are Rod Klepper and Dennis Hengen. Times staff photo by Tim Burr

## Wellness center receives \$2,500

The process of building a wellness center in Bird City has been in the works for several months. It takes many volunteers and donations to complete such a project.

Lori Janicke, a farmer in Cheyenne County, had the opportunity to designate \$2,500 to the Cheylin Schools Foundation Fund for the wellness center through America's Farmers Grow Communities.

"The wellness center is through the school but it is accessible to the whole community," Mrs. Janicke said. "I thought it was a good place for the funds to go because it benefits the kids in the school as well as the whole

community."

Through America's Farmers Grow Communities, farmers in 1,245 eligible counties can win \$2,500 for their favorite community nonprofit organization. Mrs. Janicke was chosen as the winning farmer in Cheyenne County.

In a ceremony held Feb. 21 at Cheylin School, Janicke presented the Cheylin Schools Foundation Fund with its \$2,500 donation.

"We are thrilled about this donation from the Monsanto Fund," said Bruce Bolen, superintendent of Cheylin Schools. "We have gotten many donations for the wellness

center, but we still need some equipment to finish. It is fantastic that the Monsanto Fund does this and it is great for our community."

The Monsanto Fund expects to invest more than \$3.1 million in local rural communities this year alone. In total, \$220,000 will be donated to nonprofits in Kansas.

This program is part of a broad commitment by the Monsanto Fund to invest in farm communities, in order to highlight the important contributions farmers make every day to our society.

To view all of the winners, visit [www.growcommunities.com](http://www.growcommunities.com).



LORI JANICKE presented the Cheylin School Foundation with a check for \$2,500.

## Barn raising set for March 16, 17

The Cheylin Wellness Center committee is having an old fashion barn raising on Friday and Saturday, March 16, and 17.

The Cheylin heavy construction classes have completed the outside walls and with the help of community volunteers, plan to erect the walls, finish the roof and install the siding in two days.

We plan on beginning at 9 a.m.

on Friday and having the outside of the building completed by 5 p.m. on Saturday.

A community potluck lunch is set for Friday and a cookout for everyone Saturday.

If you want to help bring your hammer or cordless drill, if you want to watch bring your lawn chair.

Mark your calendar and be a part of history in the making.

## Cougar Tales

It has been a while since I wrote my last column so let me start off with thanking everyone for all they have done for our students and our school this past semester. We have accomplished many great things and still have many more that we want to improve on and make better.

In December, each school in our Western Kansas Liberty League administered Scholarship Tests to four students from each nine-12 grade level. We are especially proud of our freshmen as they earned first place out of all the freshmen classes in our 10 schools. Congratulations to Mary Anne Orten, Allie Frisbie, Shawn Pochop, and Jacob Brubaker.

Since my last column we have also enjoyed a wonderful winter concert provided by our pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students under the direction of Mrs. Hengen. They always do a great job and I hope you were able to attend and enjoy the energy and enthusiasm shown by our students.

The Kansas Legislature is back in session in Topeka and if you have been following the news they are creating quite a stir with the introduction of a new school finance bill and also the latest information on putting teacher evaluations on a website.

There are two main proposals coming from the Governor's office on school finance. The Republican proposal as presented will be beneficial for Cheylin Schools for the short term but after that time it is very questionable what will happen to our budget authority. It is also a difficult plan to understand as some schools in our area stand to gain quite a sum of money while their neighboring schools will not gain any. In addition, there is the possibility of local entities raising more from property tax which is also problematic if we are to keep pace with the wealthy schools districts from eastern Kansas. Our local community has done well for our school, but we cannot ask for additional taxes from them.

The Democratic plan calls for the formula much as it is now but with adding additional money each year until we reach the threshold of \$4,492.00 Base Student Aid

Per Pupil. This would provide approximately \$24,000 each year for our school for the next two years and \$43,000 for the third; after that the future is sketchy. Before the session is over, there will be a lot of discussion and changes to either or both of these bills. We are fortunate to have Ward Cassidy as a great proponent of western Kansas and especially western Kansas schools.

As we enter the second semester, our student count has grown from 138 official count as of Sept. 20 to 144 as of Jan. 30. This is good for our school and our community. We appreciate the increase in numbers and the confidence the new families have placed in our school.

If you have not driven by our new Wellness Center for a while, you will notice that construction is taking place. With the benefit of some very nice winter weather, the construction classes have been building walls and will be ready in the next couple of weeks to erect some of the exterior walls. Many people have donated money, services, time, and materials in this community effort. It is especially gratifying to know that many of our students are having the opportunity to be a part of a community project, building something that their children and possibly grandchildren will be able to enjoy.

Starting the second week of March, we will begin taking Kansas Assessment Tests and this is a critically important time for our students to do their very best. Parents can help by making sure that students receive plenty of rest, good nutrition and family support during the testing months of March and April. Even though our accreditation may look different in the future, I am sure there will still be a testing component in the process.

If you have questions about budget items, or just general operation of the school, please feel free to stop by or call the office at 785-734-2341 and we will do our best to answer them.

Until next time -  
Superintendent/Principal-  
Cheylin Schools

Bruce Bolen

## Council discussed reading water meters

Water meter issues were at the top of the items discussed at the Feb. 6 Bird City City Council meeting.

Hal Sager, councilman, reported that he was unable to attend the Thresher Show Board meeting but stated they are all aware of the water meter issue. City employees plan to keep an eye on the readings and determine if the problem was solved with the new meters.

Mr. Sager said employees should be radio-reading water meters. Clerk DeAnza Ambrosier responded that there are only six water meters, out of approximately 295 in the city, that are designed specifically for radio-reading. She said she struggles each month to ensure the current system is accurate and doesn't feel she should direct her attention to trying to figure out how the system can read 6 water meters.

She said Brad Schneider, city superintendent, has been purchasing new meters that are designed with an Absolute Digital Encoder register, which does have the ability to be radio-read, however, she is not informed when or where these particular meters are installed. She further explained that the meters come with a three-wire (polarized) cord, which is then attached to the touch-pad when installed in the meter barrel, but in order to touch-read these meters using our current reading system, an error code is produced and then the reading must be manually entered. The reason for this, she explained, is because the touch-read system only requires a two-wire (non-polarized) connection. The reason the digital meters come with the three-wire cord is so that upgrading to the radio-read

technology can be more easily implemented by connecting the third wire.

Clerk Ambrosier showed a drawing that represented eight different water meter register faces and explained that the city reads the meters per 100 gallons. With so many different register denominations, she said, it's very simple for the employee doing the readings to misread a meter simply by not knowing the correct register wheel configuration, such as manually entering the reading as 100 gallons used when it was actually only 10 gallons.

Every water meter in town was replaced in 2003 and only one brand of meter was used in the upgrade. Now, she said, there are approximately three or four different brands...all with different reading faces. Once the city upgrades the current system

with new water lines and identical radio-read meters, there shouldn't be any more reading issues. But for now, she said, she'd just like to focus on the current touch-read system to ensure accurate billing.

She invited any council member, who may not understand how the current system works or who may be hearing only one side of the meter reading issues, to stop by her office and she would be more than happy to explain the process from her perspective.

Councilman Wade Carmichael reported that Century II may be interested in approving a grant to upgrade the city's water meters. Clerk Ambrosier said she believes a water meter upgrade will be included in the overall cost of the water line replacement project currently being worked on by Miller & Associates Engineering.



ON FEB. 21, prior to the varsity boy's game between Cheylin vs Rawlins County, Cheylin students were recognized for their 'exceeding' academic efforts on state testing. Superintendent

Bruce Bolen presented Josh Keltz a certificate. Helping him with the presentations was Jane Young, secretary.

Times photo by Darci Schields