

School tests well; takes first place

Cheylin received the news last week that they placed first overall in the Western Kansas Liberty League scholarship testing. There are 11 schools that are issued the same tests in November in the categories of Mathematics, Reading, Social Studies, Science and Written. The top four students from each class are invited to participate.

The senior class members were Stephanie Busse, Adam Orten, Kenan Reeh and Josh Keltz. They received second place for the senior division. Stephanie placed first in reading, second in written, and fourth in math. She placed third overall. Adam placed third in social studies, and fifth in math and written. Kenan placed third in science.

The junior class members were Walker Janicke, Shayla Hubbard, Ty Carmichael and Ellie Pochop. They received eighth place for the junior division. Walker placed first

in science and fourth in math.

The sophomore class members were Jacob Brubaker, Mary Anne Orten, Allie Frisbie and Shawn Pochop. They received second place for the sophomore division. Jacob placed first in social studies and science, and third in math and reading. He placed second overall. Mary Anne placed fourth in social studies. She placed fifth overall.

The freshman class members were Elizabeth Keltz, Ivan Kemp, Devon Janicke and Reece Leonard. They received third place for the freshman division. Elizabeth placed second in math. Reece placed fifth in social studies. Ivan placed fifth in science.

"We are very proud of how well our students did!" said Anita Burton, who is the Cheylin guidance counselor. "These accomplishments show that Cheylin students, teachers and staff are doing an excellent job in education."



WHAT COULD BE BETTER than sitting in the warm sun on a cold winter day, putting a jigsaw puzzle together with friends. Pastor Tom Bailey, left, and Norm Dorsch are busy with a puzzle at the Bird City Senior Center.
Times staff photo by Norma Martinez

McDonald Post Office could close in the future

By Karen Krien

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McDonald residents are in danger of losing their post office or reduced services. Last month, residents within the post office's delivery zip code and post office box customers were sent a survey to fill out.

The surveys are to be back by Jan. 22 and a public meeting has been set for 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 12, at the McDonald senior center.

A letter sent by the postal service said

officials would know the results of the survey before the meeting but they would not make a final decision until after they had heard the comments from the public.

"I would encourage all McDonald Post Office patrons to fill out that survey form and return it to the U.S. Post Office Department immediately," said Owen Wingfield, McDonald resident. "The post office is going to make a change in McDonald."

It is important that residents know that, unless the postal department receives 60

percent or more of the surveys back, the officials will make the changes without any input.

Residents are given four choices on the survey.

Mr. Wingfield recommends that everyone select item 1 as their choice.

"We need to keep the post office open at least four hours a day," he said, noting that is basically what item one outlines. The post office, at this time, is open two hours on Saturdays and those hours will not change.

Item two will find officials discontinuing the study for the office and, instead, offer roadside mailbox delivery by a rural carrier.

If item three is selected, it will mean finding an alternative location – probably a local business. Mr. Wingfield pointed out that there are only a handful of local businesses to choose from and it is possible that none of the businesses will meet the postal service's criteria.

Lastly, item four would be to move the McDonald Post Office to another

nearby post office.

"They (postal service) are making these changes all across the country in small post offices when the full-time employees retires, moves to another office or resigns," Mr. Wingfield said.

Everyone needs to plan to attend the meeting on Feb. 12, Mr. Wingfield said. The number of people attending that meeting and the surveys returned will show officials how interested the patrons of McDonald Post Office are about keeping our post office open.



EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS, Loren and Wendy White, work with the new hydraulic-lift gurney. The two gurneys were purchased with memorial funds.
Times staff photo by Scott Knebel

800 megahertz equipment installed

By Karen Krien

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This week, the 800 megahertz communication equipment is being installed in emergency, law and fire vehicles along with the dispatch office. The changeover from UHF to 800 radios has been discussed with the Cheyenne County Commissioners for over a year.

The Kansas Department of Transportation, highway patrol, hospital and the emergency manager, Ryan Murray, have been using the 800 radios for quite a while. However, both UHF and the 800 radios will continue to be used.

The Federal Communications Commission mandated that all UHF/VHF radios be narrow banded, which left Cheyenne County with some gaps in radio coverage. The addition of 800 radios will improve communication needs of the emergency responders and help fill some of the gaps. While the project is expensive, some of the equipment has been purchased with 911 funds and Northwest Regional Homeland Security grant funds.

The main advantage in using the 800 equipment is the ability to have better coverage and being

able to better communicate. With the 800 radios, we will be able to communicate with people all over the state as well as part of Colorado, Mr. Murray said. For instance, when the ambulance is across the state in Hays or Kansas City, they can still communicate with hospital and medical personnel. With UHF radios, they cannot.

Responder and public safety, he said, is a priority and the 800 radios will help provide this service.

The county will no longer have to maintain towers for the equipment, Mr. Murray said. All of the equipment is installed

on Kansas Department of Transportation towers.

For those who have scanners, he said, people will still be able to hear part of what is going on. For instance, the location of a fire will be heard as well as the address for an ambulance call. However, the details between the emergency medical technician and the hospital will be available only on 800 radios.

There will be some "bumps" and learning as we change over the system, Mr. Murray said, but, in the long run, it will be a tremendous benefit to the county.

Cougar Tales

It is hard to believe that we are into the second semester of the school year. We at Cheylin Schools hope all of you had a great holiday season. I know everyone here enjoyed the break and getting some time to spend with family and friends. The snow for a white Christmas was a bonus for the season.

I hope you had a chance to attend the music concert in December. I always enjoy the music and am especially proud of our students under the direction of Rose Hengen. They work hard and do a great job representing Cheylin Schools and the community. I always tell Mrs. Hengen my only complaint at her programs is that I would like to have more songs performed. The band also represented us at the Western Kansas Liberty League Tournament in Colby and I had many nice compliments as they sounded "awesome."

We have had two great success stories in the Western Kansas Liberty League the past two weeks. Every year each school selects four students from each grade level, nine through 12, to represent us in academic testing. This year our 16 students earned first place out of the 11 schools. Winning ball games is nice but this is the ultimate accomplishment since academics are our main goal for our school. Congratulations to all our 16 students, teachers, staff and parents on this success. This is the first time in many years that we have earned the top honor. We are very proud of everyone involved.

The second great accomplishment this week is our men's basketball team earning gold medals for first place at the Western Kansas League Basketball Tournament last week in Colby. Of 11 teams we were the CHAMPIONS! Congratulations to all players and coaches. Our Lady Cougars won two of their four games and had some good runs but were a little short in the other two games.

Jan. 22 is an important date for our district. We have four board of education positions up for election in April. The 22nd, at noon, is

the deadline to file for any of the positions. This year will mark a change in our elections procedures. All four positions will be at-large which means there are no longer any districts to represent.

If there are more than four candidates running, the top four people will be the new board members who will take office at the July meeting. If you are interested in running make sure and sign up before the 22nd.

If you have an interest in serving but are unsure, please stop by the office and I will try to answer any questions that you may have. It is a very rewarding, yet sometimes challenging, job knowing that you are making a difference in the lives of our children.

As many of you may have already read there is much concern among school personnel about the upcoming legislative session and school funding. We realize that taxes are high now and we do not want to raise local taxes any higher.

Keeping the 1 cent sales tax is one way that we can continue to help fund schools and other vital services. Other public services are in need of funding as well and serve important jobs within our communities.

Without getting into the politics of taxes and funding, I would encourage you to contact your legislative personnel and show your support of our rural schools and communities. Email is the best way to reach them and those who represent us are Ward Cassidy -ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov and Ralph Ostmeyer -ralph.ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov.

We have the best folks in the nation in our small communities and we must let them know that you are a voice and care what happens. They are looking for your input.

Please feel free to stop by the office anytime to visit and we will be glad to answer any of your questions or show you the amazing things happening in our classrooms.

Until next time

Bruce Bolen,
Superintendent of Cheylin Schools