



**KEN BEOUGHER collected a check for \$480 for the Thresher Association. Back, to the left, Cathy Domsch, Century II coordinator, talks with Pastor Dan Carson.**

*Times staff photo by Norma Martinez.*

## Maintenance position still has vacancy

*By Norma Martinez*

*bc.times@nwkans.com*

The Bird City Council meeting on Jan. 6 was called to order by Wade Carmichael in the absence of Mayor Hal Sager. Brad Schneider was also absent.

No one was present to make public comments and no applications were submitted for building permits. No one was present to represent the sheriff's office and report on any complaints, or activity conducted in Bird City.

### City maintenance position

To date, no qualifying applications have been submitted to fill the maintenance position. The decision was made to advertise in local papers such as Goodland, McCook and Oberlin to broaden the areas of qualified applicants to fill this position.

### Bulk water keys

Bulk water keys previously issued for purchasing water will no longer be accepted as of Jan. 21. Water may be purchased with tokens only. Tokens can be purchased at city hall at a cost of \$1 per token. Each token will purchase 200 gallons of water.

Originally, those that participated in the bulk water system were issued keys and on the honor system turned in a slip of paper with the amount of water they drew each time. They were then billed on the total amount used each month.

### Theater project

Dennis Wright, who is in charge of the demolition of the old theater building, reported the committee members working on this project had a meeting that afternoon. Both Mr. Wright and Ned Smith reported they were seeking special bids on this demolition project. Once the bids

have been submitted and they can see where they are at, they will look at the precautionary measures that need to be followed to remove the existing structure in a safe manner. "We will then call a special meeting," Ned Smith said. "In my opinion, our plan is to start the work on this project sometime in the spring."

### Parks and recreation grants

The city previously received two grants from Century II to be used towards parks and recreation. The grant issued for use toward recreation will be used to purchase some lounge chairs for the swimming pool and a sun shade. The grant issued to be used on the park will be used for repairing the cracked concrete and planting trees to provide more shade.

### Shop upgrading

Discussion was held on the poor lighting in the shop building, and the need for a new battery charger. Mr. Carmichael made a motion that was carried to spend up to \$1,000 for new lighting in the shop and \$150 for a new battery charger.

### In other business

In other business: Councilman Dennis Wright is looking in to the costs of purchasing chip and seal equipment needed to seal the cracks in the streets versus renting equipment, and possibly asking the county to do the work.

Council members approved the Environmental Review for the water project.

Council went into an executive session at 8 p.m. to discuss personnel. No actions were taken, and the meeting was dismissed.

Next meeting of the city council will be Feb. 3 at 7 p.m.

## Checks from fund raiser distributed

Grant checks for the Bird City Match Day promotion were handed out by Bird City Century II Development Foundation on Friday at halftime of the boy's basketball game. Twenty-one organizations received checks with the total adding up to \$25,065.

The event was designed to raise awareness and support our local non-profits in the community. Bird City Century II committed to match the first \$10,000 in

contributions to the eligible organizations. Donations came in the form of cash, checks and grain.

The total contributed from the community on Bird City Match Day was \$12,632.93. Due to some grant funds still available in the 2013 budget, the Bird City Century II Development Foundation Board chose to match the full amount of the eligible contributions that came in that day exceeding the original \$10,000.

Therefore, with the matched funds from the Foundation, a grand total of \$25,065.86 was awarded.

Those Bird City organizations awarded checks were: Community Club, \$3,494; Historical Association, \$400; Area on Aging, \$930; Tri-State Antique Engine and Thresher Association, \$480; Food Bank, \$1,370; Library, \$930; Emergency Medical Service, \$400; Fire Department, \$1,275; Cheylin Recreation Commission,

\$1,209; Housing Authority, \$1,000; Cub Scouts, \$400; Girl Scouts, \$400; Teens for Christ, \$800; St. John Catholic Youth Council, \$50; St. Joseph Catholic Youth Council, \$425; Awana, \$2,116.94; United Methodist Youth Council, \$2,081.92; Go-Getters 4-H Club, \$400; Thresher Association Endowment Fund, \$2,550; Cheylin Wellness Center, \$4,279; Cheylin Band Department, \$75.

## Kansas Day in Bird City coming soon

*By Marsha C. Magley*

Hauling water by sled, from a lagoon located miles from your sod house on a claim; rolling back bedcovers to discover a rattlesnake; sleeping in a wagon or tent through a howling plains blizzard, or having to accept "Beggar Beans" from the government during a time of drought - are not my idea of "The Good Life." Yet, those who did live the life of the sturdy pioneers in Cheyenne County only a little over a century ago and less, somehow survived. Or at least, a good number of them did.

"Homestead Heritage" is the theme of the 85th annual Kansas Day celebration to be held on Jan. 29 at the Bird City American Legion hall. The Kansas Day Committee encourages everyone to attend this festivity, which, this year, will highlight the 143rd year of Kansas statehood.

On March 6, 1873, Governor Osborn approved an act creating a number of new counties out of the unorganized territory in the western part of Kansas. One of those counties was Cheyenne, the most northwestern county. Township and section lines were also surveyed in 1873. A survey of public lands was made in 1874, and in 1876, the first cattle ranch, the T-Wrench, was located about 9 miles southwest of the present location of St. Francis, along the Republican River.

In 1879, the first actual settlers, the Heseluses and Day brothers settled on Big Timber. In 1880, Jacob Buck settled near Wano, and by Aug. 23, 1880, there were enough settlers to justify the establishment of a post office at Wano.

Cheyenne County was opened for settlement in 1885. The first railroad train to cross the plains of

Cheyenne County arrived on July 8, 1888, with big celebrations in both Bird City and St. Francis.

Several of the early homesteaders left recollections of when they came to Cheyenne County. A few abstractions and paraphrases from their writings (Bird City Times, Pioneer Edition) are presented here.

Notes from Irving Anderson (1932) - In 1885, father was working for the St. Joe and Grand Island Railroad. This western homestead fever was in the air. He became exposed and took the fever. We were living in Council Bluffs, Iowa, at that time. He came home and talked things over with our oldest sister, Mother having passed away in 1879, and Sister was keeping house for him. It was decided they would come to Kansas and each file on a homestead and tree claim. It was October, 1885. There was a great rush at the land office at Oberlin, so they just filed on their land sight-unseen. The locator, Mr. McCarty, told them this land was just fine. They were surprised when they came and looked it over, six miles south and four miles east of Wano. They just missed the banks of Sand Creek by about a mile. Father built two shacks that fall, they were the only ones for miles. The next spring, Father came home, (Council Bluffs), loaded an immigrant car and shipped to Haigler, Neb. Brother Bennett and I came with him, we were just kids. There were a lot of immigrant cars in those trains at that time, one man to a car, but a lot of passengers without tickets also rode those cars, and of all the hiding places you ever saw, you would find them there. There was one where they had a stove so arranged that you went through the oven to get to the hideout. If it hadn't been

for the sod houses, buffalo and cow chips, (and bones on the prairie to gather and sell), perhaps this country would never have been settled yet. The old sod house was sure fine and dandy if you kept plenty of dirt on the roof. If you didn't, a three-or four day rain would get through. It would sure get on your nerves in the night to hear the drip, drip, drip and plaster peeling off the walls with a splash. When you heard this, you knew it was 'pick up your bed and walk.' You had one last resort, and that was under the table.

The Convention Hall of the Valley (Diamond Hall) was where we had the good times. Curry brothers, Everett Kemp, Slifers, Kilmers, Tedricks, Montgomerys, Ellises, Atkinsons, Mrs. Minnie Lawless and other played in 'Grand Opera.' Everett Kemp, soon after, got into fast company and toured the world and was on a radio program in Kansas (1932).

In looking back now, we wonder how we ever got anywhere. The only way was on foot, horseback or wagon, then the cart and buggy. Those that were rich had the two-seated surry with lamps on the side. John Bowers had one of the first autos in St. Francis and it was called the "Queen," two cylinders, double opposed. One cylinder was supposed to help the other. He was hauling passengers when he was not fixing the car. Farmer Shields had the next car. Ben Barks and I started out one morning with a team and buggy. We met Farmer Shields with his red-devil, and something happened. I picked myself up off the ground and found Ben, tangled up in the wire fence. He was laughing, but that was no sign he was not dying. He came out of it alright.

Notes from H.B. Bear (1932) -

Coming here in a covered wagon, we landed in Wano, on May 1, 1886. Uhler and Benson were digging a well in the south part of town and went through shale at a depth of 230 feet. We started over the hill south from Wano, the road leading along the west side of the (Wano) cemetery. The wind was blowing and the sand flying. I said to myself: "Have I got to live here five years, until Dad proves up on his claim?" It looked sickening to me. I was 17 years old. We had to haul water for the house from Wano and for the stock from the spring on the Harkins farm. I have seen as high as five and six teams, some from down on Lawn Ridge, 10 miles south, waiting at Wano well to take their turn to fill up from two to four barrels with water by the bucket. Bill Douglas, who homesteaded over east of us, had been away from home a few days working and when he came in, it was after dark. He turned the covers back and their lay a big rattler in his bed, so he just went to the neighbor's and stayed for the night.

The blizzards were the worst foe of the settlers. The blizzard of 1886 was a very severe one. We began to see the effects of it at about Culbertson, Neb., on our way out here. From Trenton, Neb., until we landed in Wano, I do not believe that we were out of sight of dead cattle that had perished in that storm. The blizzard of April 26, 1901, there was no train in or out of St. Francis for two weeks. The railroad tried hard enough to keep the cuts clear but it seemed impossible. At one time, there were three snow plows between here and Bird City. Mr. Danielson, Mr. Uplinger and Mr. Reinhold were heavy losers. I think their combined losses were around 900 head of cattle.



**ASHLYN SCHIELDS, daughter of Kale and Darci Shields hugs her friend Jade Yates, granddaughter of Dixie and George Louderbaugh.**