

Harvest has officially kicked off!!

The first load of the 2014 Cheyenne County wheat harvest has been delivered to a local elevator, and the contest has come to a close.

"There really were a lot of entries this year, and we are very pleased with the contest," said Tim Burr, advertising manager for The Herald and Times.

The first load was delivered to the Wheeler Equity by Bracelin Farms on Sunday afternoon, June 29, with the official time of delivery being 4 p.m.

"Quality looks good, considering it is a first load of harvest," said Dale Weeks, Wheeler Equity manager.

The wheat tested 13.2 moisture, and 62 pounds test weight. The field that the wheat came from is owned by the Wilbur family, and located along Highway 36, near the Prairie Land facility, just east of St. Francis.

"You know, I don't know what it will yield until we get the field done, but it looks OK," said Chris Bracelin, when he delivered the load to the elevator.

There were hundreds of entries in this year's contest, Mr. Burr said. Entries ranged from June 18 to July 12. June 30 had the most entries, followed by June 28. June 29, the winning day, had over 30 entries.

Winning this year's contest is Sue Ellen Rethke. She correctly guessed the day of June 29, and guessed 3:50 p.m., missing the exact time by only 10 minutes. Second place went to Rachel Morris, guessing the time at 4:16, missing



GEARING UP FOR HARVEST Saturday trucks began lining up at Bird City to prepare for harvest.

Times staff photo by Norma Martinez

by 16 minutes. Third place went to Cara Hunt, who guessed 3:43, 17 minutes off, just getting squeezed out of second place by one minute. Others who were close, but no cigar, were Chris Leibbrandt, who was 28 minutes off, Jana LaBarge and Travis Jensen, were about 90 minutes off, and John Lampe and

Arlene Walz, missed by about 2 hours.

The first place winner, Sue Ellen, will receive a prize of \$50 in scrip. Second place, Rachel, receives \$30 in scrip, and Cara receives \$20. Sue Ellen and Cara had entered at the Pizza Hut. Rachel entered at the Equity Snack Stop.

The St. Francis Equity also received their first load of the harvest on Sunday, June 29, around 7 p.m. This load, also delivered by Bracelin Farms, was from a different field near Kenny Bracelin's place. The load tested 12 moisture, and over 60 pounds test weight.

Both Frontier Ag, in Bird City,

and Bartlett Grain, in St. Francis, received their first loads on Tuesday. Rod Young delivered wheat from Young Farms to the elevator in Bird City on Tuesday afternoon. "The quality was good, good test weight and moisture" said Ed Carpenter with Frontier Ag. Wheat from Royce Gienger's farm north

of St. Francis was the first load delivered to Bartlett Elevator. "We're ready to get this harvest started" said Zack Patterson, manager of Bartlett. Most of the good 'ole' boys at the coffee shops believe that harvest will be getting well underway by Friday, July 4.

Celebrate July Fourth in Bird City

*By Norma Martinez
bc.times@wildblue.net*

Progress is well underway for this Friday's BIG Cheyenne County July fourth celebration, ending at the Thresher grounds at 9:45 p.m. with forty-five minutes of fireworks, coordinated to music.

Last Sunday morning, Walker and Devon Janicke arrived at the Thresher Grounds with a big truck load of fireworks for the July fourth celebration. They were joined by Clayton Janicke and Rodney Neitzel to help unload them for storage. These were added to two big stacks of fireworks already purchased from Magnani Fireworks and the Cheylin Golf Club.

Lots of fun things and food have been planned, beginning at 9:30 a.m. and clear through

the day, until time for the fireworks. An all American hot dog meal will be available for \$6.00 at Van Doren Park from 11:30 - 1:00 p.m. Cake and ice cream will be served from 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. just before the Sing-A-Long put together by Dan Carson at the American Legion Hall. Concessions will be provided for snack type foods during the evening at the Thresher Grounds. Invite your friends and relatives to join us and celebrate on July fourth with us.

From 3:30 - 7:00 p.m. is a good time to plan a family or group picnic, play volleyball, swim for free, or just relax and visit at the park before the fireworks. A great day of celebration has been planned, so come on out and enjoy the day.



RODNEY NEITZEL unloads some fireworks to store until the big show on Independence Day.

Times staff photo by Norma Martinez

Local woman takes plea deal

*Amanda Miller
amiller@nwkans.com*

With the courtroom half full, sentencing for Leanna Windell came down after personal statements which were read by Brad Figgins' brother, and Windell made a statement. The prosecution and defense came to a plea deal, and Windell will serve 176 months in prison, with credit for time served.

With Judge Scott Showalter presiding, Windell was present with her court-appointed attorney, Charles Peckham. Assistant Attorneys General Nicole Romine and Jessica Domme were present for the prosecution.

The family of Brad Figgins were allowed to make statements first. His brother, Brook Figgins, stood to read carefully crafted words about his brother. He called Brad his trainer, coach, teacher; said he was always calm, patient and encouraging. He also read a statement from his mother, in which she referred to Brad as a "peacemaker." She went on to say that she was still struggling to deal with the reality of his death, and that her heart still ached for her son. Full of emotion, he could not read his father's statement, and handed it to Judge Showalter to read himself.

After the judge reviewed the victim's statements and photographs, he asked Mr. Peckham if his client wished to make a statement. She did.

Windell stood to say that after reading and re-reading the statements from Brad's family, she was forced to face the truth of the wake of destruction and horror she had caused. She said she was filled with shame and anguish.

Windell went on to tell the story of how she and Mr. Figgins met. She said when she met him in 1992, she thought he was her "knight in shining armor." The two married, against their family's better judgement, and tried to make things work. After they divorced in 2001, she said Brad remained close with her family. He worked two full time jobs and raised the children so she could get the help she needed for her mental illness.

Windell went on to explain that in 2009 she began attend-

ing a new church. The church told her she was healed from her mental illness, and she said that, at the influence of the church, she stopped taking her medicine and using mental health services. She believed God was rebuilding her life.

Six months later, when her symptoms returned, she says was told she did not have enough faith in God by the church members. Windell said there were a lot of major changes happening in her life between 2009 and 2013, one of them was that Brad was a part of it again. When Brad moved in with her in Bird City, she said she was kicked out of the church.

Windell told the judge that Brad stood by her side always, trying to support her. However their relationship began a destructive cycle taking them back to the past. She said it was painful and tortuous and they were sliding into a black hole.

The morning of Brad's death, Windell said that she drove herself to the hospital because she was extremely ill and thought she might be possessed by demons.

That evening's events are now known to most of the residents of northwest Kansas. Brad Figgins, 45, was found in the basement of his home the evening of April 3, 2013, with injuries to his head. He was taken by ambulance to the hospital, and later pronounced dead.

Windell said she holds herself completely to blame for Brad's death.

After she finished reading her statement, Judge Showalter addressed the courtroom. He said that there are legislative guidelines determining proper sentencing so that sentences are consistent. In her case, it says 176 months is appropriate. However, he said, in this case he felt it is far too lenient.

Judge Showalter went on to address Windell. He told her that she blames many yet claims to blame no one. It was her decision not to continue her medical and psychological treatments. It was her actions that ended Brad Figgins' life that evening. Her initial statement was filled with lies and deceit to try to cover up her actions. She alone did these things.

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WALKER AND DEVON JANICKE help unload fireworks for the upcoming celebration.

Times staff photo by Norma Martinez

Cheyenne County July 4th celebration schedule

Bird City

- 9:30- 11 Firetruck Rides - all ages (BC Fire Dept)
- Wagon rides - all ages (BC Library)
- 10 a.m. Horseshoe Tournament (Van Doren Park)
- 11 - 5 Concessions (Bird City Swimming Pool)
- 11:30 a.m. Red, White & Blue Kids Parade (Walking Path, Van Doren Park)
- 11:30 - 1 All-American Hot Dog Meal \$6 (Van Doren Park)
- 12 noon Hot Dog Eating Contest - Youth & Adult Divisions (Van Doren Park)
- 1 - 5 Free on the 4th Swimming (Bird City Swimming Pool)
- 1:30- 2:30 Patriotic Sing-A-Long (American Legion)
- 2:30- 3:30 Cake and Ice Cream Social (Bird City American Legion)
- 3:30- 7 Free Time to Gather with Family and Friends
- 7:30- 9:30 Evening Celebration (Thresher Grounds)
- Free tours of Old Sod House, Country Church & Country School
- DJ Music with Open Microphone
- Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts Finger Light sales
- Concessions
- Free rides for kids
- 9:45 p.m. Announcements & Our National Anthem (Thresher Grounds)
- 9:50- 10:30 Spectacular Fireworks display set to patriotic music (Thresher Grounds)