

Residents urged to fill out survey for post office

By Norma Martinez
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The local management from the regional post office has called a meeting with Bird City residents to be held at the Legion Hall on Thursday, July 31 at 4:30 p.m. Bird City residents were previously sent the same questionnaires McDonald's residents received last January.

Last year, in January, McDonald residents were in the same danger of losing their post office. During the meeting on Feb. 12, the towns people showed the regional post office management that they wanted to keep their post office open based on actual office work load. Over 100 residents showed up at that meeting, and expressed their desires and concerns. Because of the participation in this meeting, their post office was kept open, but with shorter hours.

Since then, on June 1, 2013, for the Bird City and St. Francis offices, consolidated carrier operations took effect. The two Bird City carriers started reporting to the St. Francis Post Office to sort the Bird City mail. Everything else remained the same between the two post offices; all retail and post office boxes and mail acceptance services remained at each post office, including picking up notified packages. The zip codes remained

the same, mail carriers delivered the same routes with some customers receiving their mail earlier in the day, some later, and some the same time. Pick up times for Bird City changed from 10:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Bird City residents requesting mail to be held have to call or go to the St. Francis Post Office to have their mail held at the St. Francis post office rather than Bird City. Mail at Bird City, St. Francis and McDonald is being sent to North Platte, Neb., for processing.

It is urgent that residents complete and send in their survey before July 31, but most important is your attendance at the meeting. The number of concerned people may help keep the Bird City post office open and leave things just as they are today. Your voice will still matter and the numbers of interested residents will say a lot.

The survey is requesting your opinion on which of the four options residents would like to see happen to the Bird City Post Office;

- Keep the office open, based on actual office work load. In the case of the Bird City Post Office, hours would remain 6 hours each weekday. Current Saturday hours will not change as a result of POST Plan, and access to your delivery receptacles will not be

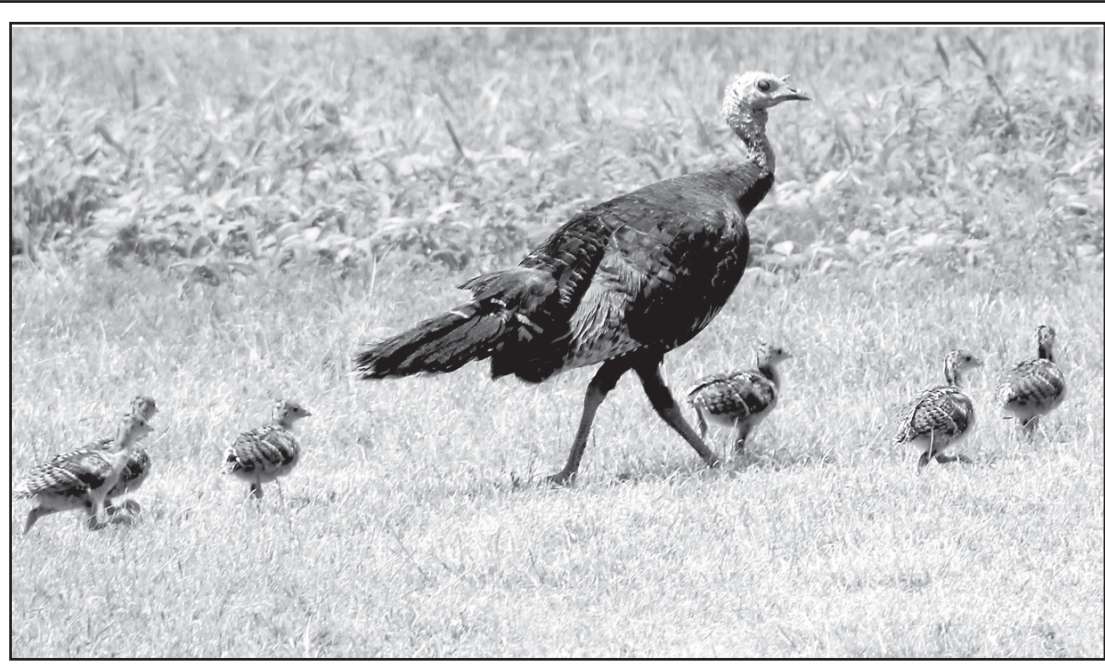
impacted by POST Plan.

- Conduct discontinuance for the office and offer roadside mailbox delivery. Retail and delivery service would be provided through a rural carrier. Mail delivery points will be established and customers can purchase most postal services through the carrier or other alternate access points.

- Conduct a discontinuance study for the office and find a suitable alternative location operated by a contractor, usually at a local business. When businesses are found that meet the criteria, these establishments are contracted through the U.S. Postal Service to offer stamps and flat rate products, with service hours generally more expansive than what the local Post Office will be able to offer.

- Conduct a discontinuance study for the office, and provide P.O. Box service via another nearby Post Office, and relocate P.O. Box delivery to that Post Office.

There is still time to pick up a survey and return it to the Bird City Post Office. Your voice will be heard and considered during the July 31 meeting. Pack the Legion Hall at 4:30 p.m. so they know what you want to happen and they can act upon your desires for how your postal needs and mail are distributed.



TURKEY BABIES came out to play near town during a nice day. Times staff photo by Norma Martinez.

Conserve America

By Bernadette Luncsford

A growing number of farmers in Kansas have "discovered the cover" and for some very good reasons. By "cover," I'm talking about cover crops, which are plants established when cash crops are not being grown.

Cover crops are planted because of their excellent benefits, including improving the health and function of soil. This leads to better nutrient cycling, improved water infiltration and more consistent yields over time. Cover crops also suppress weeds, prevent erosion, control diseases and pests as well as help pollinators.

Farmers not familiar with how mixtures of cover crops work together might ask, "Why would I want to plant a cover crop that uses up all my water?" But using diverse annual cropping rotations and cover crop combinations increases soil organic matter. And for each 1 percent in organic matter, there is a 25 percent increase in water holding capacity and up to 30 pounds an acre more of available nitrogen.

While cover crops use some water in the soil profile to grow, they simultaneously improve the soil structure by building soil aggregates, providing armor for the soil surface, and recharging the water in the soil profile through increased infiltration.

About 600 farmers surveyed in 2012 on the impact of drought reported an average increase of 14 bushels of corn per acre and five bushels more of soybeans per acre where they had a cover crop as compared with fields without cover crops.

Common cover crops in Kansas include peas, oats, vetch, tillage radish, sorghum sudan grass, buckwheat & alfalfa. Planting cover crops is one of several key steps that farmers can take to improve soil health. The other two are rotating crops, including cover crops that are planted, and not tilling.

When a variety of cover crops

are planted, especially when 10-12 plant species are planted, they increase the soil biology and speed soil health improvements. The more diversity you have, the more plant balance you have above ground, the better soil biology balance you have below ground. Plus, cover crops can help reduce compaction without deep tillage.

When only one cover crop species is planted, the single crop – or monoculture – will struggle in a drought or when facing pests. Many farmers are working with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service to choose the right mix of cover crop seeds – or "cocktail" – for their farm.

The Cheyenne County Local Work Group recently requested that Kansas NRCS consider paying producers for implementing cover crops for three consecutive years, since it requires this amount of time for a farmer to start seeing significant gains in soil organic matter. This request was granted in the 2014 Environmental Quality Incentives Program for Kansas.

If you farm or are interested in farming, visit the NRCS field office for help on choosing the right conservation efforts for your land. We can also put you in touch with local producers that have grown cover crops for a few seasons on their fields. They are a great resource for understanding local conditions and which species of cover does best in Cheyenne County.

You can also check out these two sites for more information on cover crops: website "http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/soils/health/?cid=stelprdb1077238" http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/soils/health/?cid=stelprdb1077238 or website "http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Topic-Rooms/Cover-Crop-Topic-Room" http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Topic-Rooms/Cover-Crop-Topic-Room]



Cheyenne County sees cooler weather than normal for July

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The temperatures last week has many people checking their calendars to make sure they didn't skip a few months. It certainly felt more like fall than mid-summer outside!

Cheyenne County was not the only area of Kansas, or the United States for that matter, that got to enjoy unseasonably cool weather. Records were made across the state for the coolest maximum temperature and record low temperatures.

Last Tuesday Goodland, the National Weather Service's local forecast center, tied its record setting lowest maximum temperature of 69 degrees. The

old record was set in 1972. The next day brought even cooler temperatures across the area.

Goodland set it's coolest maximum temperature last Wednesday with high of 62 degrees. The previous record of 72 degrees was set in 1989, making Wednesday a full 10 degrees cooler than any other high record, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service.

The National Weather Service recorded records being broken across the tri-state area. A record low temperature of 49 degrees was set in Hill City, and a record low of 47 degrees was set at McCook, Neb.

The cooler weather is welcomed by some, but others would like to be out at the lake enjoying the sun and summer weather that normally accompanies July. July is usually one of the hottest months of the year. In fact the record high temperature in Kansas was set in July of 1936, with high of 121 degrees according to the National Weather Service.

With the cooler weather some rain has been falling as well,

which is a welcome sight after the severe drought northwest Kansas has been enduring.

So what is causing all this fall weather in the middle of summer? It is the result of a chain-reaction, according to Dr. Jeff Masters with Weather Underground.

Tropical Storm Neoguri, the once mighty super typhoon that landed on Japan, did not impact the United States directly. However it did set in motion the chain-reaction that dramatically altered the path of the jet stream and affected weather patterns across the entire Northern Hemisphere.

Neoguri caused an acceleration of the North Pacific jet stream, which caused a large amount of warm, moist tropical air to push over the North Pacific. This amplified a trough of low pressure over Alaska, causing a ripple effect in the jet stream over western North America. This jet stream is similar to the "polar vortex" that people are familiar with from last winter.

After the cooler weather last week, the weekend brought warmer temperatures.


McDonald ice cream social held

A large crowd of over 70 people gathered Sunday evening at the Legion Hall for the annual Ice Cream Social.

Jay Gordon welcomed everyone and cracked a few jokes to break the ice.

The opening act for the evening was Leif Brown and his sister Zahara who did readings about brothers and sisters. Then Naomi Reeh and Keenan Reeh performed two vocal duets, "Me and God" by Josh Turner, and "3 Wooden Crosses" by Randy Travis. Next up, Shayla Hubbard and Conner Hazuka performed a vocal duet "Heaven". Dawn Petty was next, singing a Jimmy Roger's tune, "Come To Me." Conner Hazuka then got up and sang a solo "Forever and Ever Amen" by Randy Travis. Dawn Petty concluded the program by playing on her fiddle, "The Purple Pansie Walz" and "Whispering." Emcee Jay Gordon kept things moving right along with his oxymorons and funnies.

Afterwards everyone enjoyed soft serve ice cream and cake.

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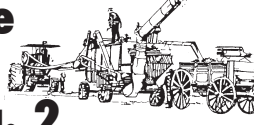

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