

# Emergency plan, sirens, weather is topic of meeting

By Karen Krien

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Severe weather, alarms, shelter areas and the placement of the dispatch office were on the emergency manager's agenda when he met with the Cheyenne County Commissioners on Monday, Feb. 28.

Ryan Murray, emergency manager for Cheyenne, Sherman and Rawlins counties, Jennifer Padgett, 911 communication director; and Janelle Bowers, emergency medical service director, talked about having a place for travelers and those not having a safe place when there is a severe weather warning. It was noted several years ago, if there was a movie showing, theatergoers could go to the basement of the courthouse.

In Bird City, these people can go to the Lutheran Church.

Andy Beikman, commissioner, recommended that there be a better tornado siren in St. Francis. There are times when he is in his business north of Main Street, he doesn't hear it.

Bird City's siren is set off manually. They discussed that firemen and emergency medical technicians question as to who is to set it off. Mr. Murray said he had talked to Rod Young, fireman, about setting up the siren to sound in the dispatch office.

Mr. Murray said he is working plans for the sirens.

### Severe weather

Mr. Murray said he will be in St. Francis during severe weather. He has access to the National Weather Service internet chat room which will give a quicker warning if there is a tornado. The county, he said, does not activate storm spotters but there are storm spotters and the firemen are out watching severe weather.

Mr. Murray and Mrs. Padgett would like to have a computer alert system which can send out messages to a large group of people at once. They thought it was a valuable tool and would cost about \$1 per user. There is a start fee and a yearly fee. Dale Patton, commissioner, suggested Mr. Murray talk to Sherman and Rawlins county commissioners to see if they are interested in sharing the cost.

They then began talking about the location of the 911 dispatch office which is on the southwest corner on the second floor of the courthouse. The office also has

huge glass windows.

They talked about putting steel mesh on the windows but the courthouse is on the National Historic Registry which would probably not approve of the mesh.

Mrs. Padgett asked about moving the office from the present location to the basement. The Food Pantry is located in two rooms but that could be moved. There is easy access to the restroom and, if there is an emergency, the outside door is easily accessed. Also important is the fact that all of the necessary electrical lines are in that area.

No decision was made.

### Ambulance converted

Mrs. Bowers said she and Mr. Murray would like to convert an old ambulance into a "check-in center." It would be used in instances like the Village fire and where there are search and rescues.

When someone comes onto the scene, they are to check in and get directions. Mrs. Bowers would probably be in command.

The vehicle is no longer used for an ambulance but still has all the electrical wiring. The commissioners agreed to convert the ambulance, have a green blinking light installed on the top and put some lettering on the side.

### Complaint

Mr. Murray said to be National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliant, one of the commissioners needed to attend training in Colby or Goodland. Mr. Patton said he could attend.

To meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements, the grain elevators in the county need to have a rescue tube. The elevator companies will purchase the tube but they would like the fire department to house the tube. The commissioners agreed to keep the tube at the emergency building.

**Emergency vehicle designation**  
Mr. Murray said his pickup was designated as the county emergency vehicle. He will need to buy a siren and he has a dash light.

He said his laptop computer had died. He had talked with Terry Miller, clerk, and, after pricing the different computers, he had decided to purchase two laptops and one will be used as a backup.

### Battery chargers

Mrs. Bowers received approval to purchase two Zoll battery chargers for the department. One charger will be purchased using Memorial Funds and one will be purchased using the allotted ambulance budget.



FIFTH GRADE students showed up in the Revolutionary War attire and put on a program for the United Methodist Thrift Store volunteers and customers on Thursday to show their appreciation for all the store has done for them.

Herald staff photo by Lezlie McCormick

# Bird City fire truck has cracked tank

By Karen Krien

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The Cheyenne County Commissioners at the Monday, Feb. 28, meeting, were told that the Bird City fire truck has a crack in the water tank.

Cody Beeson, Bird City fireman, said the water tank on their 1980 Dodge is cracked. The St. Francis Fire Department has an identical tank which isn't being used. George Harper, fire chief, said the firemen didn't plan on putting it back into service and would give it to the Bird City department.

Mr. Beeson said there will need to be some extra plumbing and there could be some problems getting it off the frame. Not only did the firemen not have three weeks to work evenings on it but, it might be needed.

Mr. Beeson had talked to Dave Fry, road and bridge department mechanic, who said the county crew did not have time. The commissioners said they needed to get the tank installed as quickly as possible and go where they needed to get the work done. They also gave the department permission to get a burned tire replaced

There is a 50-50 matching grant

being offered from the Kansas Forestry Service. Mr. Beeson said he realized that it still took money for the match but would like to apply for it. The money could be used to replace and update radios when the band frequency changes and breathing equipment. He will find out more information.

### In other business

In other business:

- Road and Supervisor Dave Flemming presented his monthly budget. Bridge inspections were discussed. Charlie Damm's wage agreement was signed.

- County Attorney Kari Gilliland said she would serve as the county's representative to the Northwest Kansas Community Corrections Board, but would also check with Sherman County

to see if the Sherman County representative would attend the meetings (in Hays) on Cheyenne County's behalf.

- Talking about the Good Samaritan Village and it's future were Randy Fitzgerald, Good Samaritan Society; Greg Hensley, director of Business Development Altman Charter Company; Jeff Paulsen, Village administrator; Greg Hensley, James Foster, Department of Commerce, Tom Keller and Kevin Berens. Mr. Fitzgerald read a prepared statement. See article in last week's *Saint Francis Herald* and *Bird City Times*.

- Chairman Ernie Ketzner signed the County Health Grant Application for \$32,600.

- Revisions to the employee

handbook were reviewed. The book will be revised and the commissioners will sign it at the next meeting

- Andrea Born's employee wage agreement in the 911 dispatch office was signed.

- Corporate Plan documents for health insurance were once again up for discussion. The commissioners agreed that they might be overcharged. Either that, or they didn't understand. They asked Clerk Miller to contact Tim Carson, vice president with the company, to come to the next commissioners' meeting.

### Next meeting

The next meeting of the commissioners will start at 8 a.m. on Tuesday at the courthouse.

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## Club Clip

### Hospital Guild

The Cheyenne County Hospital Guild met at the community room at the Cheyenne County Clinic. A delicious lunch was served by the kitchen employees.

Mr. Lacy, hospital administrator, gave the program regarding the functions and operation of the hospital

Thirteen members were present.

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