



Approval of budget takes time

By Karen Krien

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There were five people present for the budget meeting held during the Cheyenne County Commissioners' meeting on Aug. 31. After about an hour of discussion, the budget was approved as printed in *The Herald*.

It was a question-answer session with Rodney Neitzel as the speaker for the group. Others present were Tina Kehl, Jim Laffond, Cynthia and Dr. Brett Poling.

Mr. Neitzel's first question dealt with the department budgets, especially solid waste. The commissioners said that the reason solid waste had raised was to put some

money away to dig a ditch at the dump. There was also some allowed for the rising costs of oil and fuel used to cover up the trash at the site.

Dale Patton, commissioner, said the budget for 2012 basically remains the same as 2011 only the employees got a 1.5 percent increase (with the exception of the county attorney who declined a raise).

The hospital, he said, is where there was a raise. We need a good hospital – the life safety and welfare of the people are important.

Mr. Neitzel asked about the large increase in property tax. Mr. See BUDGET on Page 11

Benefit dinner planned Oct. 2

A benefit dinner for Linda Elfers has been scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 2, at the St. Francis high school cafeteria. Linda has recently been diagnosed with cancer and needs help with medical bills.

Dinner will be served from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The menu will be fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, vegetable, homemade dinner rolls and dessert.

Home deliveries will also be available. For this service, call Dolores Jenik at 332-3471 (home), 332-6129 (cell), or 332-8810 (office). This call needs to be made by Friday, Sept. 30, to let her know how many meals are needed, your address and any special dietary needs. A free-will offering will be

accepted for this meal.

The area 4-H groups will also sponsor a bake sale in the hallway outside of the cafeteria.

All proceeds from the dinner and bake sale will go to Linda for her medical expenses. Thrivent for Lutherans will provide supplemental funds. Donation checks need to be made payable to Thrivent. Those unable to attend may also send checks to Miriam Yonkey, 145 Clinton Ave., Wheeler, KS 67756.

This benefit is being sponsored by Thrivent for Lutherans, co-workers and friends. For additional information on this benefit, call Shirley Zwegardt, 332-2286 (home) or 332-2113 (work).



FIRST GRADER, MacKenzie Breese, along with Preston Witzel, were saying the Pledge of Allegiance at the start of the school day.

Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

Work on runway to begin

A pre-construction conference for the Cheyenne County Airport's runway extension project was held on Aug. 31 in the Grace Flying Service office. The meeting was chaired by the project engineer, Diane Hofer of Olsson Associates. Attending were several Airport Commission members; Dave Flemming, the county engineer, and the contractors for the \$1.88 million project.

The first phase of construction – the dirt work – will begin around Oct. 3. The dirt work for the planned 2,062-foot extension of runway – the existing hard-surface runway – is extensive, totaling 150,000 cubic yards, due to rising terrain to the southeast.

The airport runway will not be closed during this phase. By doing the grading now, the dirt will be allowed to settle over the winter, providing a more stable base for the 6-inch concrete which will be poured next spring.

In April 2012, the final dirt work will be finished and the concrete will be poured in three 25-foot-wide strips. When the project is finished in June 2012, the runway will be 5,200 feet long and 75 feet wide, making it comparable to other regional airports.

In addition to the concrete, airport boundary fencing will be installed, and the present runway lighting will be extended to the new length. A city water line will be moved so that future line maintenance will be simplified.

The estimated completion of the project is mid-June 2012, and the existing runway will be open during construction except for one week when the new paint is applied. During some of the project, the runway's length will be slightly reduced, but most operations, including air ambulance, will be possible.

Dave Yost is the Airport Commission president, and Olsson Associates are the contracting engineers. Others present were Rick Rogers, Ron Loudon, Richard Grace and Robert Grace.

Former Norton law officer released

By Carleen Bell

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After months of court proceedings and negotiations, a former Norton police officer accused of sexual assaulting two women was freed, with stipulations, Wednesday after a motions hearing in Norton County court.

Ryan L. Zwegardt was released on a two-year diversion just one week before he was scheduled to go to trial on charges of rape and aggravated battery.

Zwegardt was originally charged on April 21 with two counts of rape, one count of aggravated criminal sodomy and one count of aggravated battery after two women accused him of sexually assaulting them in two separate incidents. The charge of aggravated battery was later dropped.

Since his April 21 arrest, Zwegardt has been held in the Graham County jail and was slated to go to trial next Thursday.

Norton County prosecutor Doug Sebelius reported, however, that he and Zwegardt's attorney, Dan Walter, reached an agreement that will defer a possible trial and keep Zwegardt out of jail for two years if he fulfills stipulations sets forth by the arrangement.

"Mr. Walter and I reached an agreement to place the defendant on a two-year diversion agreement," Sebelius said. "If he has to go to trial, it will be for charges other than rape."

Essentially, Sebelius said, if Zwegardt is a model citizen for the next two years and fulfills requirements set forth by the court, all charges will be dropped after two years.

As part of the diversion agreement, Zwegardt is released from custody and will be required to reside within the state of Kansas for the next two years. He is also required to undergo therapy for anger and aggression management. See OFFICER on Page 11



TIM BURR works at his desk at *The Saint Francis Herald*. He is the new ad manager for both *The Herald* and *Times*.

Local man joins staff in ad sales

For the last month, Tim Burr has been the ad manager for *The Saint Francis Herald* and *Bird City Times*.

Tim was born and raised in Cheyenne County. Up until now, he has worked in cooperative businesses including the St. Francis Equity and Frontier Ag in Bird City.

Ad sales is a new experience for Tim and something he says he enjoys.

I like people, he said, so this job gives me time to visit with people. It is certainly a different type of job.

We are happy to have Tim join

the newspaper staff, said Karen Krien, publisher. He is a great addition.

To buy an ad or for more information on advertising, contact him at 785-332-3162 or tburr@nwkans.com.

Tim and his wife, Robin, who is a Resource teacher in the grade school, have two children. T.J. and his wife, Sarah, have two children, Riley and Tyce. They live in Evans, Colo. His daughter, Abby, lives in Denver.

Mr. Burr enjoys sports, including following the kids in sports. He also likes being with family.



Headstart school moves —

HEADSTART SCHOOL has moved to a room in the St. Francis grade school. Eating breakfast were Ethan Graham, Sophie White and Kaylee Doyle. The head teacher is Lori Beth Rieger.

Herald staff photo by Karen Krien