

# Salaries discussed at board meeting

By Karen Krien

karen.k@nwkansan.com

Salaries and health insurance were discussed when the St. Francis Board of Education met on Thursday. Both matters were tabled until the October meeting. Rob Schiltz, superintendent, reported it had been four years since the teachers and other staff had received a salary increase. He said in a few years, there will be some teachers retiring and, when hiring, new teachers will look at the base salary which is \$32,000. At one time, the St. Francis schools base salary was fairly close to being one of the higher bases in the area. However, today, it is located in the middle with many schools offering a higher base salary.

He offered two suggestions for raises for the staff. One included a 2.53 percent raise or a one-time salary adjustment which would be a one-time amount given.

"We have great people", said Derek Tice, board member, "who do a great job".

Mr. Schiltz said the staff has been very understanding about not getting raises and they are still working hard.

Mr. Schiltz had looked at the budget and thought that giving raises could be done within the budget but, at this time, many of his figures were estimates. He said he would have more information after the official enrollment is known on Sept. 20.

### Health insurance

The school's health insurance

company, Blue Cross - Blue Shield, has indicated that the average increase of the school's insurance will increase 4.4 percent in premiums. The increase will be seen on Nov. 1.

The school now pays \$315 toward a single plan and \$630 toward any other type of plan. The last year, the school paid for 20 single plans and 20 other plans for a cost of \$151,200 which is paid out of the general fund.

Mr. Schiltz proposed that the school pay an additional \$35 on a single policy and \$70 on all others. This would cost the school \$16,800 and it would be taken out of the contingency reserve fund.

The board discussed several ways of paying the insurance, possibly giving the raises talked about earlier, in the form of paying extra insurance. That way, the employee would not be taxed for that money. However, there are some employees who are not on the school insurance. How would employees get their raise? The board will not need to make a decision on the matter until the October meeting.

### Coach bus

Mr. Schiltz had received notice that American Bus Sales, Tulsa, Okla., has a 30-passenger 1998 coach bus. The price was \$39,900 but Mr. Schiltz had offered \$30,000. The offer was countered at \$33,000 and the company will paint it.

This bus would be more economical, Mr. Schiltz said,

as there are times when there just aren't enough athletes or musicians traveling to events to fill the larger activity busses. It would also save trips on these larger busses.

The board agreed that Mr. Schiltz and Sean Struab, bus mechanic, will check the bus out. If it is OK, they will go ahead and make the purchase.

### In other business

• Mr. Schiltz asked that the board approve a no-school day on Sept. 19 as there is an excellent speaker, Kevin Honeycutt, scheduled for teachers and paraprofessionals in Oberlin. The board approved.

• The board accepted a gift of \$871 from NexTech Wireless. It is a second-quarter school rebate and will be put in the general fund.

• A letter had been received from Tammy Frink, asking that her children, Caleb and Christina, be allowed to attend the St. Francis school. The board approved the request and tuition charges will be waived.

• The board went to the preliminary enrollment summary. As of Sept. 8, there were three more students in the grade school, three less in the junior high and five less in the high school. Last year, there were 300 students on Sept. 20, this year, there are 295 students, five less than last year.

• Marlin Queen's contract as the elementary janitor was amended from 187 contract days to full

time and an additional \$6,000. He will take care of spraying weeds, mowing, helping Sean Straub with the floors and other repairs which were put off during the school year.

• Scott Carmichael, principal, reported that the students will be participating in "Walkable School," where students will be exercising 30 minutes each week. Grade school students are already participating and the junior-senior high school students were starting the week of Sept. 12.

### Next meeting

The next board meeting has been set for 7 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 13, in the board room at the high school.

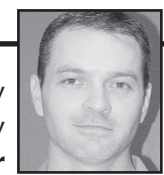
# Post office starts new retail hours

Sonja Weeden, Bird City Postmaster, reports that beginning Sept. 17, the last mail pick up at the Bird City Post Office will be 1:50 p.m. Monday through Saturday. The change was necessary due to the shift in mail processing operations from Colby to Salina. Also effective on Sept. 29, the new retail hours at the Bird City office will be 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The new hours reflect that part of the day when most customers typically go to the post office. Saturday retail hours will not change. Customers, Mrs. Weeden said, are reminded that virtually all of the service you find at the post office are available at usps.com.

# Across the County

## Beef fall calf conferences planned in three locations

By Marty Fear



County Extension Agent

Kansas State University will host the K-State Beef Fall 2011 Calf Conference in three locations - Atwood, Oakley and Stockton, in late September. Keynote presentations and speakers at all three conferences are the "Beef Cattle Market Outlook," by Glynn Tonsor, livestock marketing specialist with K-State Research and Extension, and "Calf and Stocker Research Highlights: Updates in Management, Nutrition and Health," by Dale Blasi, stocker and forage specialist with K-State Research and Extension. Each conference will include a meal and location-specific speakers, as well. Dates, times and site-specific presentation topics include:

Sept. 27 - Atwood - 6:30 p.m. - 4-H building - Reply by Sept. 22 to 785-626-3192 or cdixon@ksu.edu

Beef quality assurance Sept. 28 - Oakley - 10 a.m. - Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center - Reply by Sept. 22 to 785-743-6361 or rsbarrow@ksu.edu

Keeping pastures productive; and local forage analysis, feed costs and ration balancing; lowering winter feed costs:

Sept. 28 - Stockton - 5 p.m. - Rooks County Fairgrounds, Harding Hall 4-H building - Reply by Sept. 26 to 785-425-6851 or rboyle@ksu.edu

Winter grazing opportunities As our growing season winds down, it's time to plan and assess your winter grazing options. Some options may be better this year than most. Hay and silage are really expensive. If you can find something for your animals to graze

rather than be fed hay and silage, you will probably save over a dollar per day per cow.

Extra rain in many areas this summer and fall produced more than the usual amount of growth on rangeland, plus good re-growth on alfalfa and grass hay fields. A few fields of summer annual grasses have nice new growth. And there's even a lot of volunteer winter wheat growing in many areas.

These all can be grazed this fall and winter.

Yes, you may need to take some slight precautions to do it safely. Alfalfa has a slight risk of bloat. Green wheat and grass re-growth might have a tendency to cause some grass tetany or respiratory problems if animals are moved to these lush pastures from dry, brown pastures without any adaptation. Be careful following a hard freeze, or maybe wait until a few days after a killing freeze happens before

putting animals on these lush pastures. And many fields may need some temporary fence or have water hauled to them.

But don't let these challenges prevent you from using these resources. Not only will you get some good quality, less expensive feed for your animals, grazing also could be good for the land.

Most of the nutrients in the plants will be recycled back to the soil via manure and urine, making them available to support next year's crop. Look around, wherever you have grazable growth remaining, take advantage of it. It's like money in the bank, and good feed, too.

Contact the Cheyenne County Extension office at 332-3171 or cfear@ksu.edu with questions or comments. Until next week - Marty

# Homework child's responsibility

A new school year typically brings a mix of excitement - and anxiety.

While each family will be unique, Charles A. "Chuck" Smith, K-State Research and Extension child development specialist, explained that parents will face similar issues, such as getting children to and from school, balancing school activities with family life, and making sure

the homework is done.

Homework? It's the child's work, so what should a parent's responsibility be?

"Homework can strengthen the classroom experience," said Smith, who encouraged parents to help younger children organize their time to include time for homework and to provide a quiet place for a child to do his or her homework, without radio, television or other

distractions.

Parents also are encouraged to be available if a child should have questions, said Smith, who encouraged parents to try to lead the child to an answer or conclusion, rather than volunteering the answer.

"A child needs to take responsibility for his or her work, and to take responsibility for completing the assignment," the child development specialist said.

Failure to complete an assignment will have consequences, and that also can be a learning experience for a child, Smith said.

More information about managing family life successfully and providing opportunities for children to learn and grow is available at K-State Research and Extension offices throughout the state and on Smith's Web site: www.k-state.edu/wwparent/.

## Handy Tips

- Flies or bees bothering you? Spray them with hair spray and they will take a quick dive.
- Sealed envelope - put in the freezer for a few hours, then slide a knife under the flap. The envelope can then be resealed.
- Use empty toilet paper roll to store appliance cords. It keeps

them neat and you can write on the roll what appliance it belongs to.

- For icy door steps in freezing temperatures: get warm water and put Dawn dish-washing liquid in it. Pour it all over the steps. The mix won't re-freeze.

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Glad Real Estate / Rocky Hayes - Auctioneer

415 State, Po Box 173 Atwood, KS 67730      Office: 785-626-2039      Cell: 785-626-4022

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