



RANDY NELSON, St. Francis volunteer fireman, was trying to extinguish the fire in this haybale Thursday afternoon. This was just one of the fires firemen were called to during the week.

Herald staff photo by Tim Burr

Birdhouse look proposed for water tower

The water tower in Bird City needs repainted and it is estimated that the cost to paint it gray will be around \$18,000. Tom Bailey, pastor of Immanuel United Methodist Church, and Cathy Domsch, executive director, Century II, presented a new and unique plan for repainting the tower at the Monday city council meeting.

Pastor Tom asked the question, "What do Sesame Street's Big Bird and television's Extreme Makeover" have in common with Bird City?"

The answer was, "Why not paint it to look like a bird house?"

It could be what makes Bird City a stopping point as people come to see the "World's largest bird house," he said. "Come to Bird City and see the world's largest birdhouse!"

The plan presented was to wrap the water tower with a vinyl wrap to look like a giant bird house. Vinyl typically outlasts paint and is less prone to fading.

It was suggested that the design of the giant birdhouse could be opened to international competition with an award for the chosen design.

So, now, what does Sesame Street have to do with Bird City's water tower? Perhaps, he said, Sesame Street's Big Bird could be invited for the celebration and the unveiling of the water tower. We could have a huge crowd in Bird City, he said.

And Extreme Makeover? Steve Hess, World Class Graphics and Displays, does all the interior graphics for Extreme Makeover's Home Edition televi-

sion show, Pastor Tom said. His company, based in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is a leader among companies that do custom wrap projects of city buses, buildings and water towers.

DeAnza Ambrosier, city clerk gave the 1921 blueprints of the water tower to Pastor Tom. Copies of the blueprints along with digital photos of the water tower were sent to Mr. Hess. He estimated that the cost of the project would be from \$21,000 to \$25,000.

The cost would include wrapping the tower from the catwalk to the bottom of the roof. Once the design is approved, it would take about two weeks to print, laminate and install.

Opportunities
Once the water tower is transformed into a giant birdhouse, it could draw people from far and near to see the unusual and whimsical.

While in the city, they would eat at local restaurants, look over the community, visit souvenir shops selling replicas of the water tower, birdhouses, bird stationery, post cards, key rings, paperweights, feeders, seed, T-shirts and Christmas ornaments, just to mention a few.

We might even see the corner cafe and soda fountain reopen for business, he said.

The Bird City City Council and Bird City Century II have the opportunity to put Bird City on the map, he said. This project idea will come from the community and will instill city pride.



BONNY DAM, west of St. Francis, is completely drained. The lake was once a large lake where families enjoyed fishing, boating and swimming. Recent regulations required Colorado to let the water out into the Republican River.

Herald photo by Elmer Kellner

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HOT

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On Saturday, Chief Harper said they were called out six times. Four of the fires were caused by lightning strikes and two were caused by fireworks.

Lately, the largest fire was a pasture fire southwest of town by Callicrate Feedyard. This was also caused by lightning.

There have been several hay bale fires, one was hit by lightning, the other was caused by a spark while being hauled. Jack Weinstein, who was hauling the load, was able to get the smoldering bales in to a worked field, unload them and get the trailer and truck to safety.

The firemen have suffered with the heat while wearing the heavy

bunker gear. Last week, the emergency medical service put out a call for water, sports drinks and snacks for firemen. Within hours, donations had come in, lining the halls of the emergency building. Other people donated checks and cash to help restock supplies.

These supplies are being used in Cheyenne County, both St. Francis and Bird City. They are not used in Colorado, said Jannelle Bowers, emergency service director. And, more donations will be accepted. Stop by the emergency building or mail a check to Box 453, St. Francis, 67756 designating it for water and supplies for firemen.

Chief Harper said there is a lot of dead, dry vegetation in the fields, pastures and ditches. The

smallest spark can cause a raging fire, whether it be from a vehicle exhaust, target shooting, the sun hitting on pieces of glass or the tiniest firecracker. Even if it rains, he cautioned, there is still danger of a fire.

The county commissioners adopted a fire ban at the June 15 meeting. Since then, both Bird City and St. Francis city councils put out a notice that fireworks were banned. Up until Monday, the July Fourth display was still on but Mayor Scott Schultz and the city council made the final decision to halt the display. It just isn't worth causing a fire, he said.

The fireworks display has been moved to Labor Day weekend. See related article.

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