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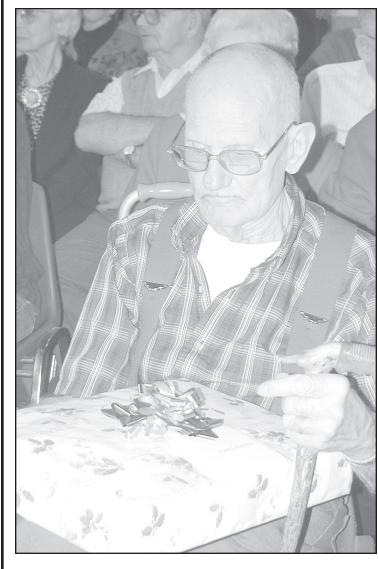
CLIP AND SAVE - - -

Christmas ain't just for kids!

Good Samaritan Village residents enjoyed the annual Christmas celebration as much as those helping and others attending. Below, Chad Miller entertained with music; right (clockwise) Santa handed Hope Bressler her gift; Kathleen Stanley and Robert Morrell also received gifts.









Staff photos by Karen Krien

Program funding, cutoff dates told

The Kansas State Office, Salina, of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced cutoff dates for evaluating applications for 2002 Farm Bill programs. These programs are Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), and Grassland Reserve Program (GRP).

According to Harold L. Klaege, state conservationist for Natural Resources Conservation Service in Kansas, the allocation for financial assistance for Kansas for these programs

is almost \$25 million. "Funding was announced early this fall by United States Department of Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman so farmers and ranchers can make sound management decisions regarding conservation practices and planting," said Conservationist Klaege. "This allows them greater certainty and predictability in their decisions on environmental stewardship.

"Since we have received our state allocation," he said, "we have been able to determine when the cutoff dates will be to evaluate the applica-

tions that producers have submitted. "A producer has the opportunity to sign up for the Farm Bill programs to address their resource concerns anytime during the year," he continued, "but we do need to establish cutoff dates to be able to evaluate and fund the applications submitted."

Natural Resources Conservation Service is the primary Federal agency of the United States Department of Agriculture that works with private landowners to help them protect their natural resources. The agency emphasizes voluntary, science-based conservation technical assistance; partnerships; incentive-based programs; and cooperative problemsolving at the community level.

The conservation programs described below may help in solving vour resource concerns. For more information on these and other programs, check the Web sites listed below for each program, visit Natural Resources Conservation Service at: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/, or contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office.

Listed below is a summary of each program and the cutoff date established for Fiscal Year (FY) 2005

• Environmental Quality Incentives Program: The Environmental Quality Incentives Program is a voluntary conservation program that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. Through Environmental Quality Incentives Program, farmers and ranchers may receive financial and technical help to install or implement structural and management conservation practices on eligible agricultural land. "http:// www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/ EQIP_signup/2005_EQIP/ index.html"

• Wetlands Reserve Program: is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. Easements and restoration payments are offered as part of the program. http://

wrp/%20

• Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program: The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program is a voluntary program that encourages creation of high quality wildlife habitats that support wildlife populations of national, state, Tribal, and local significance. Through Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical and financial assistance to landowners and others to develop upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic habitat areas on their property. http:// www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/

• Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program-Essential Habitat Areas (EHA): Landowners interested in restoring and protecting essential plant and animal habitat for the lesser or greater prairie chicken should apply for the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program-Essential Habitat Areas. Applications for Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program-Essential Habitat Areas are accepted on a continuous basis. Brush management is the only cost-shared conservation practice available through the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program-Essential Habitat Areas and will be cost-shared at 100 percent. Contracts will have a 15-vear duration.

• Grassland Reserve Program:

Financial

Assistance

\$1.5 million

www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/ Grassland Reserve Program is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property through easement and rental agreements. The program emphasizes the preservation of native and natural grasslands, support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and the protection of grassland that is under multiple threats of conversion. http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/pro-

grams/grp/ Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP): Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranchland in agricultural uses. A permanent easement is held by a qualified entity to protect the land from being developed for uses other agriculture.http:// www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp/

Apply at Local Natural Resource

Conversation Service Office Information about these programs is available on the Web site at http:// www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs or Web sites listed above or at your local USDA Service Center from the Natural Resource Conseration Service or conservation district staff, located on West Highway 36 in St. Francis.

Kansas Established FY-2005 Funding and Cutoff Dates

Farm Bill Program

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) **Environmental Quality Incentives**

Program (FRPP)

Program (EQIP) \$22 million Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)\$402,573 Essential Habitat

General Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) Farm and Ranch Lands Protection

\$1.7 million

\$600,000

Friday, February 18, 2005

Friday, March 25, 2005 To Be Announced

Cutoff Date

Friday, December 17, 2004

Friday, January 21, 2005

April 5, 2005