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Logan County updates radiology

By Jan Katz Ackerman

Colby Free Press
jkackerman@gmail.com


Logan County Hospital has upgraded its radiology department by adding a new CT scanner, and the department will soon make the move to filmless X-rays stored on computer disk.

"As a critical access hospital, we provide state-of-the-art equipment to ensure our patients get the best possible care without having to leave the community," said Administrator Scott Buck. "Our Siemens Emotion 6 CT scanner will help us achieve that goal."

The scanner replaces a single-slice scanner previously in the radiology department. Coming with a price tag of \$340,000, the new scanner enables faster, more accurate diagnoses Buck said, and provides new applications to better serve patient needs. He said the new machine provides optimal patient comfort by eliminating the closed-in feeling sometimes associated with CT scanning.

"The advanced technology that the system provides allows us to better serve our patients and the community," Buck said. "We will now have the ability to do a wide variety of diagnostic studies and complete trauma procedures in a shorter amount of time."

Buck said clinical benefits to patients include better diagnostic details and excellent image



- **Beds** 25 as critical access hospital.
- **Revenue 2007** \$7,024,000
- **Profit 2007** \$99,000.
- **County money** \$270,000 from 6.4-mill property tax levy.
- **Doctors** three county-employed doctors; one county-employed nurse practitioner.
- **Phone** (785) 672-3211

quality.

He said the scanner will enable doctors to acquire long-range vascular studies and combined thorax-abdomen examinations. Faster diagnosis will enhance clinical performance and reduce processing time, as well as reducing examination times.

"We are excited about the new addition to

our facility," Buck said. "We look forward to the impact it will have on patient care in Logan County and surrounding areas."

Besides the scanner, Buck said a \$70,000 project is underway to change the department over to filmless X-rays.

"We'll no longer have films," Buck said. "The X-rays will go onto a compact disc and if the patient needs to take X-rays to another facility, they will take the disc."

Buck said the change to compact discs should eliminate patients having to have an X-ray or CT scan redone at a larger facility due to poor quality coming out of Logan County Hospital's outdated equipment.

"Basically, we are converting to computerized radiology," he said.

The upgrade is being made possible through a grant from U.S. Rural Utilities Service with the assistance of Hays Medical Center.

Board members are Dr. Richard Loftus, Randy Sangster, Warren Park, Donita Sparks, Curtis Thompson, Johnny Daniels and John Moorhous.

While many small, rural hospitals struggle to make ends meet, Logan County Hospital, at 211 Cherry St., and Logan County Manor, the long-term care facility at 615 Price Ave.,

share a \$7 million budget. For the third year in a row, the organization realized a net profit, of \$64,822 in 2007. This compares to a net profit of \$450,000 in 2006 and a net profit of \$385,000 in 2005. The critical access hospital, which has 25 beds, employees 80 people, and the nursing home, which has 46 beds, has 60.

Medical providers Dr. Alejandro Curiel, Dr. Celeste Rains and nurse practitioner Ramona McCarty work at a clinic on the west side of the hospital, New Frontiers Health Services.

The phone number for Logan County Hospital is (785) 672-3211, for Logan County Manor the number is 672-8109, and for the doctor's office 672-3261.

Working along side both facilities is the Logan County Healthcare Foundation. Established in 1993, the foundation's mission is to enhance health care services. Financed entirely through private money, it has generated more than \$1 million for health-care equipment and needs in the county.

Money comes from tax credits, fund raising, donations and planned giving. Donations can be set up as planned giving through an estate or trust, made as a memorial or in any way of

See LOGAN, Page 16



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Rawlins County supports hospital

By John Van Nostrand

Colby Free Press
jvannostrand@nwkanas.com

A presidential candidate once wrote, "it takes a village to raise a child."

One area town has the same approach with its health-care facility, Rawlins County Health Center in Atwood.

"There is a lot of community support," said Administrator Deanna Freeman. "There is a lot of positive. They talk positive about the hospital and utilize its services."

RE
HE

Rawlins
County
Health
Center

- Beds 24 as critical access hospital.
- Revenue 2007 \$4.9 million as of Fiscal Year 2008 (June 30, 2008)
- Loss 2007 \$187,068
- County money \$394,000
- Doctors One physician, 2 physician assistants
- Phone (785) 626-3211

Rawlins County Hospital was founded by the Atwood Rotary Club through the efforts of Dr. C.E. Henneberger. On May 7, 1950, more than 3,000 people attended the dedication.

Through the years, key services have been enhanced or added to assure top-of-the-line health care. The hospital adopted the name Rawlins County Health Center to reflect the relationship between the hospital, clinic and Prairie Plaza Retirement Community in September 1997.

Today, the hospital is a 24-bed critical access facility. Freeman began her duties in Atwood in January, coming from Mankato.

She said she likes what she has seen in the hospital's operation, adding that cohesiveness among staff has been key.

"I'm impressed with the staff here," she said. "Sure, there is turnover, but it is not that high. I visited with a lady who had recently retired after working here 29 years. You have a lot of staff who has been here for quite a while."

And it's not just staff. One member of the hospital's nine-member board has served for 20 years.

LeRoy Luedders is in his second year as board president. Luedders, an Atwood native, said he returned after a career in the aerospace industry.

"I thought I had something to give back," he said.

During his 20 years on the board, Luedders said, he has learned that the people the facility serves don't want to go anywhere else.

"When it comes to the bottom

line, people really don't want to travel for basic care," he said. "The ones (living) near or in Atwood, there's not much more to travel to someplace else, but it's a huge economic engine. We need to be keeping rural economy and the local economy vital."

Both Freeman and Luedders said they know Rawlins County's demographics show more of an older population. That also shows in the hospital's finances, which depend more on Medicare services and payment.

"The challenges are Medicare reimbursement," Freeman said. "It's a constant game."

Medicare is the federal government's health insurance plan for those 65 and older and others

on Social Security. Not every Medicare reimbursement to a health care provider pays the entire bill for the treatment, administrators say, and that can put small hospitals in a bind.

"I don't think there is a solution to fight Medicare," Freeman said. "People should visit with their representative and let them know your needs and concerns."

With the changes in population in mind, the hospital has plans for improvements in the future. As it reaches its 60th birthday, Luedders said, the board wants to make sure the hospital is current and with the trends in health care.

See RAWLINS, Page 17

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RAWLINS COUNTY HEALTH CENTER in Atwood opened in 1950. The board is proposing upgrades to encourage people to utilize services there, rather than going out of town.

Logan County updates radiology

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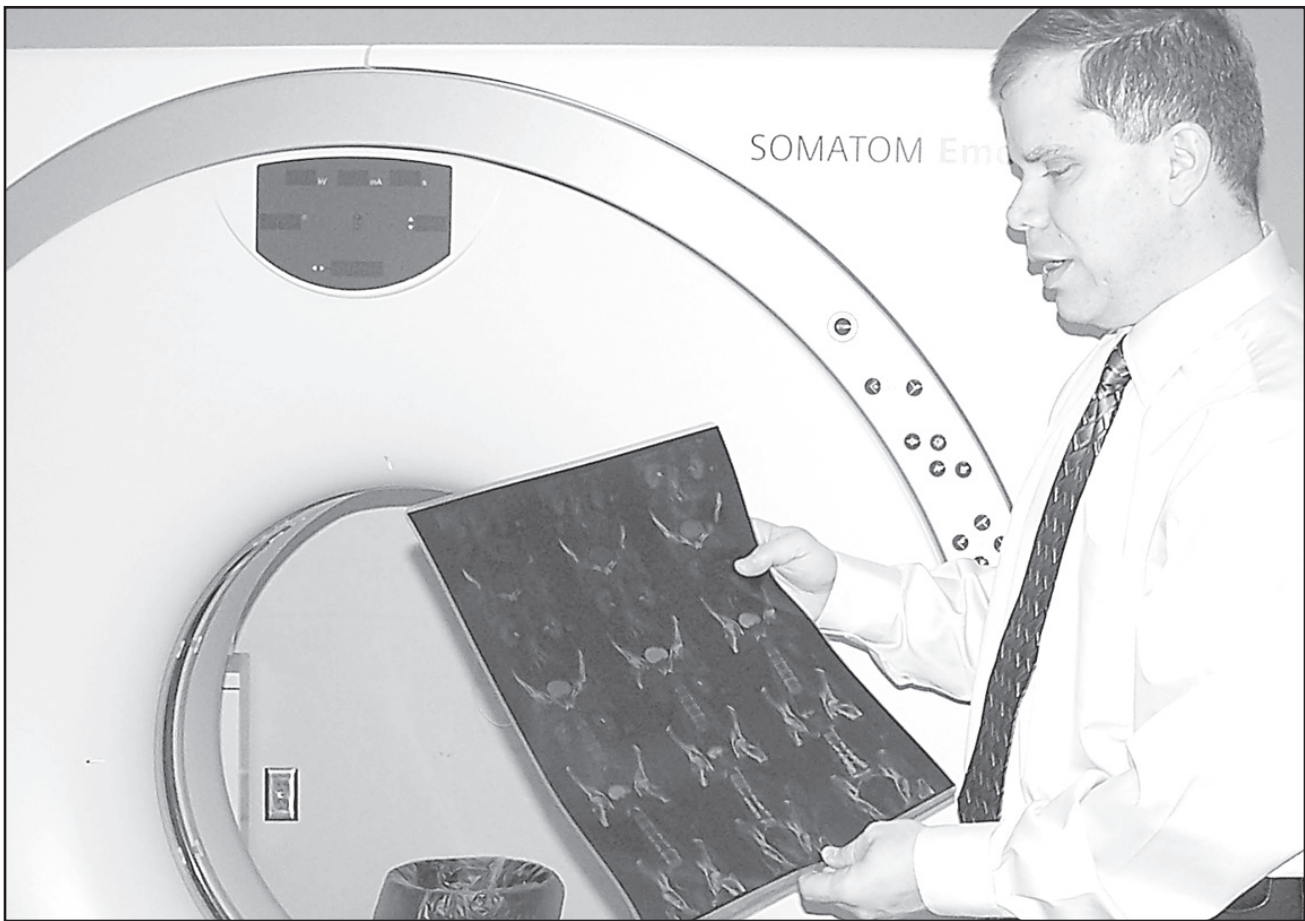
the giver's choice. The foundation's office is at 216 Center Ave. in Oakley.

The foundation awards scholarships to medical professions who agree to work in Logan County, sponsors health education and awareness programs like the Wellness Fair, pays for technology and equipment upgrades at the hospital and helps in recruitment of medical professionals.

Many pieces of state-of-art equipment has been donated to the hospital by the foundation. That equipment includes a telemetry machine for heart patients and a new recumbent bike for cardiac rehabilitation. The laboratory received a new blood cell counter and analyzer, a new coagulation analyzer and a new cardiac enzyme analyzer.

Respiratory therapy received a new blood gas analyzers and physical therapy received a new hivamat machine for muscle tissue care. In 2005, the foundation purchased a building in downtown Oakley and converted it into a pharmacy. University of Kansas School of Pharmacy student Kezia Schwietermann agreed to work under a 10-year contract, after which time she will own the drug store out right.

Another piece of the medical pie is the specialty clinics provided by area surgeons. Those currently providing specialized care are a bone surgeon, Dr. Michael Baughman of Sandhill Orthopedic and Sportsmedicine of Garden City; eye specialist Dr. William C. Fry of Fry Eye Associates of Garden City; heart specialist, Dr. Christine Fisher Michael of the DeBakey Heart Institute in Hays; and foot specialist, Dr. Steven Larson of Larson's Podiatry of Hays.



LOGAN COUNTY HOSPITAL Administrator Scott Buck talked about the facility's new six-slice CT scanner. The \$340,000 machine is fast becoming part of the hospital's computerized radiology department, which is converting from film to compact disc storage.
— Photo by Jan Katz Ackerman/Colby Free Press

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Rawlins County supports hospital

RAWLINS, from Page 15

"We need to maintain positive growth," he said. "We are considering an expansion that would include a new patient wing, emergency room renovation and lab and X-ray."

Luedders said he knows it's not 1950 anymore, and it shows in health care and treatment.

"The hospital is nearly 60 years old and the nature of health care has changed in that time," he said. "We need a newer facility for primary patient care."

Luedders said the proposals have been made to the public, but the plan is still in the early stages. He said the more the people know, the better.

"We are going to have to provide a lot of information for the public to understand," he said.

Luedders said he hopes the development of information will be twofold, both to explain why the current facility is not adequate and, "This is an appropriate way to fix it so we are in a desirable place for the public."

Freeman said there is a proposal to renovate the hospital's physical therapy department. She would like to update the equipment and enlarge the department.

"It's a very popular service," she said. "Right now, we have one full-time physical therapist. I'd like to consider more staff, too."

"In rural America, ... for a small, rural hospital, you have your staff. They are your team and have to be prepared for everything."

Luedders and Freeman said they hope the public support for the plans will match what people have already done for the facility. The foundation is just an example, they said.

The Rawlins County Hospital Foundation, which helps the hospital with services and equipment, started in 1988 with money from memorials and bequests. In 2002, it affiliated with the Area Community Enrichment Foundation so that it can be considered a fully qualified charitable organization for tax purposes.

RADIOLOGY MANAGER Carey Lang posed with imaging equipment at the Rawlins County Health Center. The hospital board has proposed upgrades to equipment and the facility this year.

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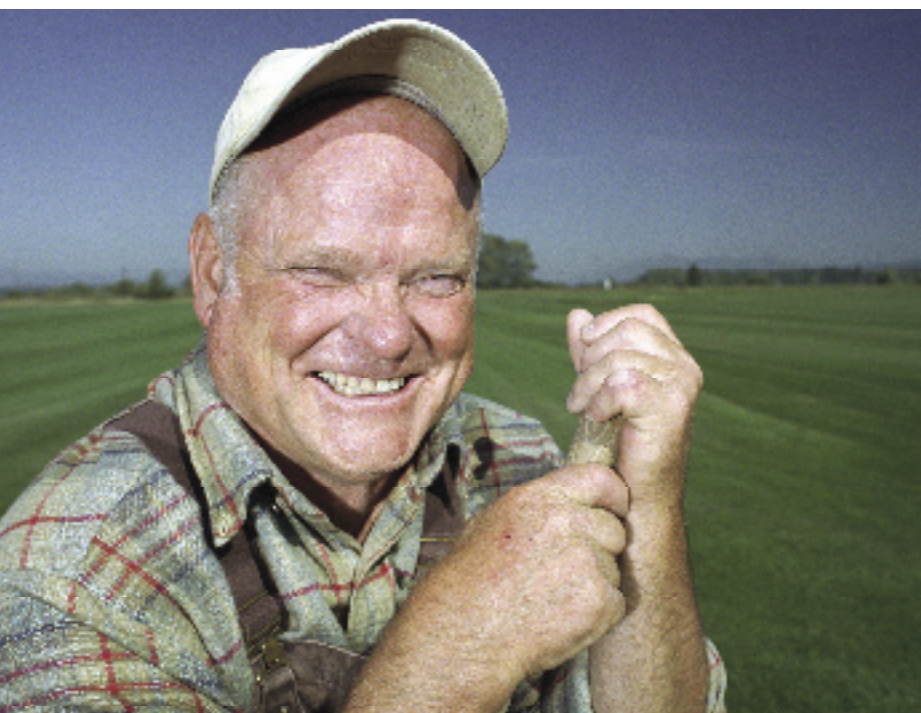
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