

# Choirs perform



The Goodland High School and Grant Junior High School choirs performed for a full auditorium on Tuesday night at the Goodland High School auditorium. The choirs opened the program singing in one large choir with members on stage and down the center and side aisles. Above is one of the junior high choirs. The sixth grade, seventh grade, eighth grade, freshman, Black and Gold, mixed choirs and the Xpressos also sang numbers. The vocal director is Emily Blankenship with accompanist Laura Biermann.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

# Domestic violence group now open at new office

Domestic violence and sexual assault service provider Options has moved its administrative offices to 2716 Plaza Avenue in Hays. The new location allows Options to provide critical services in a more sensitive and professional setting, while increasing the amount of private meeting space and staff work areas.

Former Goodland resident Charlotte Linsner, Options Executive Director stated, "The decision to

make this move reflects Options dedication to continue providing life-saving advocacy services and, also the continued commitment to address the needs of violence victims throughout northwest Kansas. It is an exciting step for us and we are forever grateful to all who were involved in making the move possible."

Options invites the public to stop by 2716 Plaza Avenue in Hays and tour the facility, especially the chil-

dren's dedicated room.

The building was previously owned by the Farm Bureau of Hays and has been unoccupied since 2010. When approached by Options, the Farm Bureau Board was very supportive and agreed to reduce the price of the building. With the sale of the previous Options office, the use of reserve funds and a modes loan, Options was able to purchase the building.

Kenton Oliff, Options' Board

President states, "This move would not have been possible without the support of the community members and organizations involved. The decision to purchase this property was not made lightly. We are hopeful the community we serve will support this move both in spirit and when considering their opportunities to donate."

"Options provides often overlooked, yet critical services, for many communities in northwest

Kansas," says Christie Brungardt of Jana's Campaign. "Though Options' staff works tirelessly to reduce partner violence, we must all assume some responsibility in helping them eliminate this societal issue."

Options provides free and confidential services to any individual who has experienced domestic, sexual, interpersonal or stalking violence in northwest Kansas. Services include a 24-hour crisis

hotline, personal support, safe shelter, community referrals, individual counseling, support groups, community awareness and prevention programs.

Options serves 18 counties of Northwest Kansas with two offices; main office in Hays and an outreach office in Colby. Learn more at [www.help4abuse.org](http://www.help4abuse.org).

# Kansas insurance commissioner wins award

The National Association of Insurance Commissioners consumer representatives recognized Kansas Insurance Commissioner Sandy Praeger for her work on behalf of insurance consumers at the association's fall national meeting in National Harbor, MD, recently.

Praeger received the Excellence in Consumer Advocacy award. According to the consumer reps, "Through her leadership of NAIC's Health Insurance and Managed Care (B) Committee, Commissioner Praeger has played a major role in moving forward the health



**sandy praeger**

• insurance comm.

reform agenda of the NAIC. She has also been a tireless advocate, both at the state and national level, for a meaningful role for state regulators in shaping the future of health insurance regulation."

The association's consumer representatives promote consumer

activity and participation in the NAIC deliberation process, but they do not represent the membership.

As chair of the associations B (Health and Managed Care) Committee, Commissioner Praeger has, according to the consumer reps, "consistently ensured that the concerns of consumers are represented and addressed."

Other accomplishments the consumer reps cited about Commissioner Praeger during the awards

presentation:

- During her 10-year stewardship of the Kansas Insurance Department, Praeger and her staff have been committed to their mission to "regulate, educate and advocate" for Kansans. Because of this, consumers calling the department almost always talk live with a representative.

- The department's two-time national award-winning website has been praised for its ease of use and volume of available information.

- The department's Consumer Assistance Division has recovered

more than \$104 million for consumers since 2003 in claims money above and beyond what insurance companies had offered.

- Early in her tenure as Commissioner, Praeger established an anti-fraud division, a four-person unit that has recovered more than \$4 million while working more than 4,600 cases.

- As part of her overall consumer emphasis, the department provides nearly 200 public presentations annually on insurance topics.

The award presentation was made during the associations, Nov. 29

Consumer Liaison program at the fall meeting.

The Commissioner received a standing ovation from the committee members and audience attending the meeting.

## corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

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