

County to replace radios ahead of narrowband deadline

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software for its laptop computers in order to remain Health Information Portability and Accountability Act compliant. Desktop computers are not required to have it, he said, because they are usually behind a locked office door.

Next on the list of purchases are two bone drills, which are used if an intravenous medication lines aren't working. Wright said two of the ambulances are already equipped with drills. Wright said the department will soon have to get all the medications to stock the ambulances. There are laws prohibiting the county from taking the supplies currently used by the hospital-run ambulance service.

• Met with County Attorney Brock Abbey. Commissioner Cynthia Strnad questioned Abbey about his purchase of an \$1,100 television.

Abbey said the television has WiFi and Skype capability, something which many county departments can utilize. He said that for teleconferencing he was having to go outside the building. Strnad said she thought it was an excessive expenditure.

• Had a visit from Larry Sharp with the Kansas County Association Multiline Pool, which provides liability, property and casualty insurance for about 60 Kansas counties. Sharp said the organization is the provider of all Sherman County's insurance except for worker's compensation.

Sharp said he is the public relations person for the pool, and he tries to get to each county at least once a year. He spoke to the commissioners about their loss ratio, which this year the payout was higher because of claims such as a destroyed fire truck. The county's premiums are figured

on a four year average, he said. In 2011 they were \$81,000.

Sharp said he is talking to many counties about a common misunderstanding that the pool provides event coverage at public facilities such as the fairgrounds. The pool does not provide that sort of liability coverage. It insures the facility itself against damage, but counties should require organizations to provide their own insurance. County Clerk Janet Rumpel said this is usually the county's policy.

• Met with Jerol DeBoer of Penco Engineering, who said that the bridge inspections that had been submitted hadn't had the dates changed. This is correctable, he said, and offered to do the work for about \$800.

The commissioners asked DeBoer to look at County Road Three, which is developing large cracks and potholes.

Guard, Reserve encouraged to nominate supportive employers

National Guard and Reserve members are being encouraged to nominate their employers for the 2013 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.

The Freedom Award is the highest honor for civilian employers supporting Guard and Reserve members. The award highlights those employers going to extraordinary lengths to encourage their military employees' service and provides Guard and Reserve members a way to show their appreciation for their employers' tremendous support.

Just over one month remains for Guard and Reserve members to nominate their employers. Family members may submit nominations on a Guardsman or Reservist's behalf. Employers of every size and industry are eligible. Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense agency, will accept nominations at www.FreedomAward.mil through Jan. 21.

The 2013 recipients will be announced in early summer and honored in Washington, DC, during a ceremony next fall.

Humanities council has grants

Kansas Humanities Council has grants available for next year to support projects that use the humanities to connect people with ideas, places, and history.

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, museum exhibitions and short films that strengthen community and encourage discussions,

oral history, photograph digitization and research projects.

The 2013 grant deadlines are: Feb. 27, May 29, and Sept. 25. Grant guidelines are available at www.kansashumanities.org.

The Kansas Humanities Council is a nonprofit organization that supports community-based cul-

tural programs, serves as a financial resource through an active grant-making program and encourages Kansans to engage in the civic and cultural life of their communities. For more information, visit www.kansashumanities.org.

Federal lunch guidelines changed after public expresses concerns

Recent changes in school lunch menus required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act are generating discussion in the nation's school districts.

"The 2012 changes in the menus are intended to address concerns about children's nutrition, health and obesity that can lead to chronic diseases," said Sandy Procter, K-State Research and Extension nutrition specialist, and state coordinator for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education and Family Nutrition Programs. "People have been complaining about school lunch for years."

Procter, a registered dietitian, said complaints often focused on school lunch menus with too many high-fat and fried foods, lack of age-appropriate portions and less costly foods rather than nutrient-dense foods that could cost more, but contribute to health.

"These are the first changes to the school lunch guidelines in many years, and in many districts, the difference is significant. In other places, voluntary improvement has been gradual over time, so students and parents see little change this year."

Procter noted the changes to school lunch menus are based on research and intended to address specific nutrition and health issues, including:

- Age-appropriate portions for three groups: kindergarten through 8-year-olds; 9- to 12-year-olds and high school students.

- Health-promoting foods, including lean proteins, low-fat dairy products, fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

She said the move toward standard portions helps youths meet nutritional requirements for health and become more familiar with a standard portion. Kids will be more

able to choose an appropriate portion when at home or on their own, and place a cap on calories to help manage a healthy weight.

Expanding the variety of foods offered meets Department of Health and Human Services and Agriculture 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, but does add to the cost, which is supported with additional federal money, she said.

If children and teens are complaining to parents about not getting enough to eat, they may simply be choosing not to eat the foods offered, said Procter, who noted that youths who are not familiar with fruits, vegetables, whole-grain breads, crackers and cereals, or dairy products served may initially shy away from them.

While adjusting to the changes will likely be a gradual process, said said, many food-service professionals report students making the adjustments fairly quickly.

"Youths who eat an increased variety of foods can begin enjoying health benefits — increased energy, greater ability to manage a healthy weight, more restful sleep, healthy skin and improved overall resistance to illness are possible examples — almost immediately," she said.

School lunch or breakfast menus may not suit everyone, said Procter, who noted that some may prefer a sack lunch from home.

She advised parents to plan snacks to fill the gaps between meals, with a preference for health-promoting snacks, rather than pre-packaged snack foods that introduce extra calories, fat and sodium.

If, for example, students will be staying for after-school activities or sports, Procter advised check-

ing with the school office for a list of snacks that can be sent with students.

Checking with the school is an essential step, as many kids are allergic — or critically allergic — to everyday foods, such as a peanut butter sandwich, she said.

A whole-grain granola bar, fruit, cheese and crackers are shelf-stable, nonperishable snacks that will fill the gap between meals, she suggested.

While parents and nutritionists support the idea of kids coming home hungry so they'll be ready to eat a variety of foods offered for the evening meal, Procter recommended keeping a bowl of washed and cut vegetables and low-fat dip in the refrigerator as a ready snack

to take the edge off the appetite, but not spoil the upcoming meal.

"If we provide healthful options, like fruit and vegetables, snacks can help kids meet nutrition needs," said Procter, who noted that updated school breakfast guidelines will be introduced next year.

More about changes in the school lunch program is available at www.fns.usda.gov/cga/PressReleases/2010/0632.htm.

More information on choosing and using a variety of health-promoting foods, and managing family meals and snacks is available at K-State Research and Extension offices throughout the state and online at www.ksre.ksu.edu and www.ksre.ksu.edu/humannutrition/.

Official asks congress to extend tax relief

Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt is urging Congress to extend tax relief for consumers who have mortgage debt canceled or forgiven because of financial hardship or a decline in housing values.

Schmidt is one of 41 attorneys general to sign a letter to U.S. House and Senate leaders, urging them to extend the exclusion, which has been in effect since 2007 and which will otherwise expire on Dec. 31.

The expiration comes at a time when homeowners nationwide are benefiting from the \$25 billion national settlement agreement with the nation's five largest loan servicing companies. That agreement has already provided more

than \$24 million in debt relief to Kansas homeowners and \$17 billion nationally. Many other banks also offer mortgage modification and debt relief programs.

"Congress should extend this critical tax exclusion so that the very families who can least afford it are not stuck with an unexpected tax bill," Schmidt said. "Extending this tax exclusion could save taxpayers another \$1.3 billion over two years."

Under the federal Mortgage Debt Relief Act, in effect since 2007, mortgage debt that is forgiven after a foreclosure or short sale or through a loan modification provided to a homeowner in financial hardship

may be excluded from a taxpayer's calculation of taxable income. This exclusion only applies to mortgage debt forgiven on primary residences, not second homes.

An extension of the tax relief is included in the Family and Business Tax Cut Certainty Act of 2012 which recently passed out of the Senate Finance Committee with bipartisan support.

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Reader Recipes

Almond Tea Bread

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups flour
- 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 3 eggs

- 2 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 cup plus 2 TBSP vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 cup milk
- 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

- 1 1/2 tsps. almond extract
- 1 1/2 tsp. butter flavoring
- 4 1/2 tsp. poppy seeds

Combine the flour, baking powder and salt together in a bowl and mix well. Beat the eggs, sugar and oil in a large bowl. Beat in the dry ingredients alternately with the milk. Stir in the vanilla, almond extract and butter flavoring. Stir in the poppy seeds. Pour into a nonstick bundt pan or 2 nonstick loaf pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes; the bread will be very moist. Cool in the pan for 10-15 minutes. Remove to a wire rack to cool. Drizzle the glaze over the cake.

GLAZE

- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

- 1/2 tsp. almond extract
- 1/2 tsp. butter flavoring

Combine the sugar, orange juice, vanilla, almond extract and butter flavoring in a small saucepan. Cook until the sugar dissolves, stirring frequently. Let cool slightly.

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