

Board backs away from proposed plan

By Karen Krien

For months, the St. Francis Board of Education has been talking about building a commons area and new gym to the south of the present high school gym. But, at the Monday meeting, the board agreed to back off of the proposed \$2.4 to \$2.9 million "dream."

Carl Werner, superintendent, had asked the architect Glen Strait not to attend the meeting. He had been concerned about the uncertainty of school finance and thought the board could discuss the project and other possible alternatives.

Cliff Raile, board member, said that he was glad to see a pause in the plans so the board could talk about what was best for the school and the

community. He said that the school has always needed another gym but some of the comments he had heard was the need for a community meeting place and the planned commons area would have met that need.

Bonnie Zwegardt, board member, said that she had been asked why the board was considering building when the enrollment was de-

creasing. She was also concerned about what the new governor was going to do and, in the end, could the board afford to build.

Principal Scott Carmichael pointed out that no matter if there were 15 or 30 kids in basketball or in the classroom, the prep time is the same.

"Just because we (the number of students) are

not bigger doesn't mean they are not important," he said.

Superintendent Werner said that teachers and coaches had said they thought that the real need at the school was for another gym, not necessarily a commons area. At the present time, seventh grade and junior varsity basketball and

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New members take seats on hospital board

By Karen Krien

The Cheyenne County Commissioners had a difficult decision to make when they met on Monday. There were four applicants wanting to replace two of the seats on the hospital board. After considerable debate and interviewing of two candidates, the board voted with there being a three-way tie between Leon Brethower, Traci Neitzel and Joy Alderegg. The tie was broken using a ranking system and this time, Mrs. Neitzel and Mrs. Alderegg were voted in as the new hospital board members, each serving four years.

The terms of Kelly Gienger and Mr. Brethower would be up at the end of the year and Mr. Gienger had already expressed a desire to be off the board however, Mr. Brethower, who has already served for eight years or two terms, wanted to be considered again for a third term. While he had been on the

hospital board, he had been the chairman of the board and had seen the hospital bond issue be voted down and then come back with a lower bond amount which passed. He would have liked to have seen the clinic remodeling and new addition and remodeling of the hospital completed while he was on the board. Mr. Brethower was out of town and was unable to interview with the commissioners.

The other person applying for the hospital board positions besides Mr. Brethower, Mrs. Neitzel and Mrs. Alderegg was Laverne Boll.

Joy Alderegg

Mrs. Alderegg had interviewed with the commissioners for two years and the commissioners excused her from a third interview. In a previous interview, she reported that she had moved from Denver to Bird City several years ago.

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Residents asked to help children in need at Christmas

By Karen Krien

There are still angles hanging on the Angel Trees. In fact, as of Tuesday, there were still 20 angels hanging on trees in both banks and Cheyenne Pharmacy just waiting for someone to take them, purchase a present for the angel and bring it back by noon on Friday. Presents will be delivered to children in need by Christmas.

This is the 11th year for the Angel Trees and each year, people from St. Francis open their hearts and pocketbooks to help some child's Christmas be a little merrier. Sometimes, this gift is the only gift the child will get for Christmas.

The Association to Benefit Cheyenne County, formerly the St. Francis Jaycees, is in charge of setting up the Angel Trees and delivering the gifts to the children. Jennifer Boyles, member of the organization, reported that around 80 angels were hung with as much information about the child as was known.

Ms. Boyles has hung angel tags with the age and sex of a child on each of the Angel Trees located at First National

Bank, Cheyenne Pharmacy and Bankwest. People are urged to stop at one of the trees and pick a tag.

After selecting the angel, purchase a gift(s) equaling at least \$25 for the anonymous child on the tag. Bring the gift back to one of the above businesses by Dec. 20, being sure to enclose the number listed on the tag so the gift can go to the right needy child. It is nice if the gift is wrapped or the wrapping and ribbon enclosed.

Cash donations for the Angel Tree are also accepted. This money is used to help give those kids who might not have as much under the tree to have a much nicer Christmas and picks up miscellaneous expenses.

If someone knows of a child who will probably not be receiving much for Christmas, please call 785-332-2344 and asked to talk to Jennifer or Travis.

"If a person takes an angel, please make sure that the gift is purchased and delivered by the 20th. If a problem arises and you will be not able to purchase a gift, please contact us — we don't want a child to go without a gift," Ms. Boyles said.

Commissioners against fence on road

By Karen Krien

At the Monday meeting, the commissioners showed concern about a certain farmer who had placed an electric fence on the edge of a county road and the water tank was located almost to the road.

Not only was it impossible for the county crew to grade the road but it was also dangerous. Dave Flemming, road and bridge supervisor, had asked the farmer to move the fence. The commissioners asked if he contact the farmer again and, if he had not moved it, he was to have the county attorney send a letter telling him that the fence was to be moved immediately.

The commissioners discussed the liability issue and that, if the situation was ignored, and an accident happened, the county would be liable because they knew about the fence.

he moved to the bottom of the ditch but did not want fences going up the ditch toward the road.

Supervisor Flemming told the commissioners about a scraper which was being sold on the internet and that he would be bidding on it. He once again discussed illegal dumping and several of the parties which have illegal dumping on their property which is spilling onto the roadway had agreed to clean up the site. The supervisor will be checking into additional information on another site.

The supervisor expressed concerns about the governor's withholding of city and county shared funds. Until more is known about the states financial stability, Supervisor Flemming will not be proceeding with some of the planned projects.

Sheriff's report
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JARED SCHAFFER had a very serious talk with Santa before the drawings took place on Sunday.
Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

Scrip dollars given away

Bob Hankins, St. Francis, claimed one of the two \$50 scrip certificates by matching his red ticket number to one of the numbers printed on Pages 1, 2 and 3B of last week's St. Francis Herald and Bird City Times. That left only one number unclaimed and it was given away during the Christmas On Us drawing held Sunday in the park in St. Francis.



Hankins

This year's winners of \$50 in scrip besides Mr. Hankins were: Jeanne Dunn, Ed Marin, Laura Pugh, Cliff Semler, Brenda Delano and Becky McAtee. The winner of the \$50 scrip in the park drawing was Andy Beikman.

Other winners were: Bertha Rogers, \$1,000 in scrip; Patricia Lawrukiewicz, \$500; and Tobe Zwegardt, \$100.

It was estimated that around 50,000 tickets were in the bin waiting to be pulled out on Sunday. That meant that \$500,000 was spent in St. Francis and Bird City as a ticket was given with each \$10 purchase.

Mr. Zwegardt reported that in all of his years (and those years are adding up), he had never won a prize so he decided to share part of his winnings and purchased food for the county Food Pantry.

Mrs. Rogers said that she was going to give the \$1,000 to the Food Pantry.

See PRIZE on Page 8A

Almost \$3,000 scrip, prize given away

By Karen Krien

The weather was beautiful with temperatures in the 60s Sunday and it was just right for the drawings held in the band shell at Sawhill Park. This year, the Christmas On Us promotion was held in conjunction with the St. Francis Area Chamber of Commerce activities and everyone attending seemed to have a good time, especially those winning prizes.

There was almost \$3,000 in scrip money and prizes given away. The Christmas On Us grand prize totaled \$1,000 in scrip and was claimed by Roy Elfers in behalf of Bertha Rogers. Winning the second prize of \$500 scrip was Mrs. Claus, better known as Patricia Lawrukiewicz. Tobe Zwegardt took home \$100 in scrip and Andy Beikman claimed the last \$50 scrip which remained from the weekly ticket number matching. Winner of last year's grand prize was Ronee Reichert, St. Francis.

Winning the Chambers' three \$200 scrip certificates were Howard Clark, Kay Jensen and Ed Marin. The winner of the 24-inch television set was Mike Merino.

The band shell was filled and outside there were other people just standing or sitting on the benches, all eager to claim a prize.

The afternoon had started off with many of the business places opening at 1 p.m. to help shoppers fill their Christmas lists. Santa and Mrs. Claus visited with children on the streets and then went to Krien Pharmacy until 3 p.m. when they once again boarded



HOWARD CLARK was one of the \$200 scrip given away by the St. Francis Area Chamber of Commerce. Handing him the certificates is Shawna Blanka, Chamber president. Mrs. Claus (Patricia Lawrukiewicz) drew the number.
Herald staff photo by Leslie Hilt

their tractor-drawn sleigh (on wheels since there was no snow) to go to the band shell.

Roger Jensen and Don Gilliland had spent part of the day preparing chili which was served in big cups. Even though the weather was warm and the chili was hot, it seemed to hit the spot and by the end of the drawing, the pot was empty.

The Choir Contest had three entries: First National Bank, the Cheyenne County Hospital and the Good Samaritan Village. First National Bank employees, Tom Keller and Myra Douthit came on foot but were cleverly dressed and carried candles; the hospital crew arrived in a Christmas decorated ambulance and

wore scrubs; the Village staff were angels complete with wings along with a few shepherds and rode on a hay wagon.

Paul Rainbolt, committee coordinator, had judges stationed at four different areas and the choirs entertained patients at the hospital, residents at the Good Samaritan Village as well as people on the streets and at the band shell. Each did an excellent job and the judges had a hard time making their decisions but the end results found the Cheyenne County Hospital staff as the winner. Scores were: Hospital 2,214; First National 1,978 and Village 2,190.

Mr. Rainbolt said that he was sure the Village would win but no such luck but a traveling trophy will be presented to the

hospital staff instead. Next year, the plaque will be once again available to the winner.

Each group was judged on singing ability, mode of transportation and dress or costume and the winner took home \$25 in scrip. It was obvious that they were having a good time.

Santa and Mrs. Claus had to compete with the firemen's Elf Train as children stood in line waiting for their turn for a ride on the train. The Elf Train was in service from 3 to 5 p.m. when the activities at the park concluded.

Shawna Blanka, Chamber president, wished everyone a very merry Christmas.

PLANS

Continued from Page 1A
volleyball games are held in the grade school gym which is small with little seating. There is the inconvenience of walking back and forth from the high school to the grade school as well as the inconvenience of not having enough practice gyms from time to time.

The superintendent said the architect had suggested that the plans be "scaled down" to where the board could afford it.

Instead of having a down-in-the-ground gymnasium that would hold 2,000 people, have a ground-level gym that would seat 500 to 700 people and have an 84-foot regulation-sized court. The commons area, instead of being approximately 3,000 square feet, would be at 8,400-square-foot area and would be more like a lobby, having room for ticket sales, concessions and rest rooms.

The cost of the scaled-down plan would be approximately \$1.4 to \$1.5 million.

A preliminary sketch of an additional alternate plan would expand the seating within the present gym to the south and the west, add some lobby space, rest rooms and locker rooms to the west of the present gymnasium. A new auxiliary gymnasium seating 500 to 700 people would be built to the south.

John Knodel, board member, liked the idea that with the commons area, the rest of the school could be locked off and would provide more security. The scaled-down plan offered that security.

Superintendent Werner suggested there were several considerations including consolidation and regionalization.

"Maybe we need to wait and see what happens — maybe if we build a smaller gym, it may be in the way if we need a

larger gym," he said.

Most of the board agreed that a plan needed to be in place and they needed to know what options they might be looking at if they decided to build.

Bruce Feikert, board chairman, asked the question, if they did decide to build, would they want to deplete the Capital Outlay Fund? The board agreed that they did not want to deplete the fund.

Cost estimates for the alternate are not available but it was thought that the project might be affordable within the school's present available funding, especially if it is completed in stages with the gym being the first stage.

The superintendent said he would discuss the matter with school personnel and the matter would be on the agenda for the next board meeting on Jan. 9.

FENCE

Continued from Page 1A
Sheriff Eddie Dankenbring asked about replacing a computer in his office. The funds were not available for this year but the commissioners agreed that a new computer be purchased after the first of the year. Clerk Terry Miller said that the old computer might be used as a third computer in the sheriff's office.

The commissioners were concerned about the cost of the office cell phone bill. The sheriff said he was aware of the high bill and he and the undersheriff had discussed the matter. The board felt that \$94.20 be reimbursed by the undersheriff for personal calls while he was attending a training and the department's cell phone not be used for personnel calls unless absolutely necessary as it could, as in this case, push the bill over the free minutes.

The commissioners also asked that repairs to the department's vehicles be done locally.

In other business

Commissioner Brubaker asked for

executive session to discuss personnel. No decision was made.

- The commissioners signed the Household Hazardous Waste plan.

- The commissioners agreed to give employee bonuses with full-time employees receiving \$200 and part-time employees receiving \$100. All are given in scrip certificates.

- Danny Schlittenhardt, noxious weed supervisor, was okayed to go to a West District Weed meeting but the commissioners denied the request to "blanket" all meetings — that he needed to notify the commissioners before each meeting.

- After discussion, the commissioners agreed to comply with the Hays Daily News' request to submit all minutes of meetings in 2003 and to notify the staff of a special meeting.

- The commissioners selected Traci Neitzel and Joy Anderegg to serve on the hospital board.

- Tim Carson, representing Corporate Plan, the county's health insurance company, reported that the county had a low rate of claims in the last four

years. He recommended increasing the county's specific deductible. The board agreed to the increase but to keep the employees' deductibles as they are.

- Eric Fiala, the representative for Western Plains Resource Conservation and Development, asked that he not be put down to serve another term. He recommended several other people for the position.

- Larry Gabel, emergency medical service coordinator, will be asked to attend the next meeting to discuss personnel and the emergency medical technician training class.

- Following the meeting, the commissioners, county clerk went with Supervisor Flemming to view the proposed gravel pit on the Gale Walz land. It was decided to keep digging to the north of the current site rather than start a new pit. If this is unacceptable to Mr. Walz, the county will use the pit to the east located on Thad Douthit's land.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the commissioners will be held at 8 a.m. on Dec. 31 at the courthouse in St. Francis.



GRADE SCHOOL CHILDREN, kindergarten through second grade, collected food for the Food Pantry and were helping Reva Pownell, Food Pantry coordinator, and Shirley Swihart, kindergarten teacher. Pictured, l to r, are Lane Lawson, Mrs. Swihart, Mickey Ann Geihlsler, Tristan Archer, Blake Meyer, Mrs. Pownell and Cade Bracelin.

Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

SEATS

Continued from Page 1A
Prior to her move, she had spent 35 years in nursing but was not retired.

She said that she had extensive medical background as well as knowledge in management. She had worked in corporate-owned hospitals and was comfortable with budget and cash flow management.

She felt that everyone needed to be a team player but when push came to shove, she felt that it was important to go ahead with what needed to be done.

She is a member of the Cheyenne County Development Board, had been through the Leadership, Cheyenne County class and was interested in seeing the county and communities survive.

Traci Neitzel

Mrs. Neitzel, who was born in the Cheyenne County Hospital and whose mother, a registered nurse, worked in the facility for many years, said that she wanted to make sure that the hospital and clinic kept on running efficiently. As a loan officer at First National Bank, she felt that her banking and financial experience would help her not only understand budgets quicker but could also benefit the board.

She said she was easy to get along with but had a reputation of speaking up when she needed to.

"I want to hear both sides before making decisions," she said.

She pointed out that females often had a different view point than males and thought that the board, which is

now comprised of all men, could use a female's point of view.

Commissioner Tim Raile asked how she felt about lowering the taxes collected for the hospital if there came a point when all of the tax money was not needed. She replied that, at this point, she did not have the experience to answer that question.

Mrs. Neitzel has served on the St. Francis Area Chamber of Commerce Board, on church committees and has been through the Leadership, Cheyenne County class.

Laverne Boll

Mr. Boll was of the firm conclusion that the hospital needed to improve but needed to keep account of the expenditures. Several people had asked him to apply for the board position and, while he thought he was qualified, he also thought the job might be bigger

than most expected.

He was concerned about Great Plains Health Alliance having a lot of control and that Cheyenne County had no control. In the board's five-year plan, he was concerned about what would happen if more money was needed. At that point, he, Commissioners Raile and Ron Krien discussed that the hospital collected \$325,000 in ad valorem taxes and approximately \$250,000 in sales tax year.

Mr. Boll said he was not going in with a negative attitude and was not necessarily a "follower."

He said he still works on the farm and had served on the school board, the Wheeler Co-op Board and church boards.

"If I am selected to serve on the board, I will treat it like my own business," he said.

PRIZE

Continued from Page 1

ing to share half of the money with Amy Hilt, whose step father took the tickets to the drawing and claimed the prize. Amy said she was going to share her part of the winnings with her family.

Mr. Hankins figured most of his winnings would go to the grocery store but was glad to have it.

"The opportunity for people to win some big money would not have been possible if it had not been for the participation of the 21 St. Francis and Bird City businesses in the Christmas On Us giveaway," said Karen Krien, publisher.

Those participating in the Christmas On Us giveaway were: Bankwest of Kansas, Bier's Hometown Store, Burr

Retail Liquor Store, Cheyenne Bowl and Dairy King, Cheyenne Pharmacy Plus, Decision Weather, Downtown Repair and Auto Sales, Tim E. Poling, D.D.S., Goodell Greenhouse and Floral, Lampe Hardware, Owens True-Value, P and L Ideal Meat Market, Pizza Hut, Park Hill Restaurant, and Lounge, St. Francis Equity, The Saint Francis Herald/Bird City Times, Saintry Super Foods, Schultz's, Stevens' Kansas Territorial Store, Tri-State Lumber and Tubing, Video Kingdom.



Feedlot owner files lawsuit against Kansas City meat packer

By Eric Palmer
The Kansas City Star

Kansas City-based Farmland National Beef used its market power to punish a small Kansas cattle feeder that publicly criticized the giant meat packing operation, according to a lawsuit filed in Kansas City.

The lawsuit in U.S. District Court alleges Farmland National Beef quit buying cattle from Callicrate Feedyards in St. Francis because Mike Callicrate publicly criticized Farmland and other large meat packers for having too much market power.

The lawsuit seeks actual damages of \$5,345,000, as well as punitive damages and attorney's fees.

Callicrate's lawsuit is similar to a complaint filed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture against National Beef in 1999. The United States Department of Agriculture alleged National Beef used its market muscle to retaliate against Mr. Callicrate. The United States Department of Agriculture dropped that complaint last year after National Beef agreed to repay the government the cost of the investigation.

That administrative action did not keep Farmland from continuing to refuse to buy cattle from him at competitive prices, Mr. Callicrate said. The result, he said, is that he must now close his feed yard.

"None of the meat packers will buy from me," Mr. Callicrate said. "I have already let 12 people go that worked in the feed yard."

John Miller, chief executive of Farmland National Beef, said Mr. Callicrate's lawsuit was without merit. "National Beef's conduct with re-

spect to Mr. Callicrate has always been fair and lawful," Mr. Miller said in a prepared statement.

He said that when Farmland National Beef settled the complaint with the United States Department of Agriculture, the agency's order found that National Beef was not required to buy from any particular producer.

"National Beef owes an obligation to its customers and owners to buy the highest-quality cattle at the lowest possible price," Mr. Miller said.

Farmland National Beef is a partnership of Kansas City-based Farmland Industries Inc. and U.S. Premium Beef Ltd. It operates beef processing plants in Dodge City and Liberal.

Farmland Industries, the country's largest farmer-owned cooperative, has been operating under bankruptcy court protection since May 31. But the National Beef partnership is not part of the bankruptcy proceedings.

Mr. Callicrate has been an active critic of the consolidation in the meat processing industry, which has concentrated about 80 percent of that business in the hands of four major companies. Farmland National Beef is the country's fourth-largest beef processing company.

The lawsuit points out Mr. Callicrate was a plaintiff in a class-action lawsuit against meat packer IBP for allegedly uncompetitive practices at the time Farmland began its boycott.

Mr. Callicrate said Farmland National Beef has the closest meat processing plant to his feed yard and does most of the cattle buying in the area. The company was his main customer for 12 years before it essentially

stopped buying from him in 1998 after he and an employee spoke out against the prices National Beef was offering to cattle ranchers who sold direct to the company.

The new lawsuit alleges National Beef violated the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921 and the Kansas Consumer Protection Act. The suit says both acts forbid retaliating against a critic, boycotting a cattle feeder and engaging in any act or practice to promote a monopoly "including a local or regional monopoly."

The fact the federal government settled the United States Department of Agriculture's complaint without a finding of fault does not preclude Mr. Callicrate from filing his own action, said David Domina, the Omaha, Neb., attorney who filed the suit.

He believes there has been no political will for years to enforce federal laws against anti-competitive practices in the meat industry.

"This is why other people won't speak out," Mr. Callicrate said. "As result we are going to lose our markets and our domestic cattle industry. So much for free speech."



EARLY DEADLINE!!

So the staff can enjoy the holidays and readers will have their papers by Thursdays, all copy and ads are due by Fri., Dec. 20, and Fri., Dec. 27, at 5 p.m. for the Dec. 26 and Jan. 2 papers.

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