

Emergency services fundraiser a success

By Norma Martinez
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Saturday brought snow and the temperatures in the 20's, but it did not stop folks from packing the Emergency Building for the Fireman, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) first responder appreciation night that brought in \$1,530. At least 150 residents enjoyed the dinner consisting of barbecue grilled pork chops, baked potatoes corn and rolls. Lots of choices of cake were served for dessert. The equipment lined the streets and firehouse grounds in order to make room for the tables and chairs set up inside the building. Due to the cold and wet weather, the time to check out the new equipment and demonstrations were canceled.

The new garage door openers, purchased with last year's funds and the grant from Century II, were put to good use in moving the heavy duty equipment in and out of the building. They have already served their purpose by cutting down the time opening and closing the large heavy doors.

At 7 p.m. sharp, Cody Beeson, as the Secretary, emergency training officer, and 10 year member of the Sheriff's office, began the presentation by introducing the following volunteer EMT responders and fire fighters: Loren White serves as Fire Chief and has served 13 years, and the Assistant Fire chief Rod Young has served 37 years, Gary Brubaker 36 years, Wade Carmichael 25 years, Ted Burr 23 years, Dale Hazuka 12 years, Wendy White with EMT 10 years, Brian Miller 9 years, Craig White 8 years, Dennis Wright 7 years, Lucius White, Jacob White, and Jay Keithline 6 years, Randy Miller 4 years, Larry Shults, Josh Sowers, Nathan Sowers, Willie Martinez, Dennis Whitmore, and Mike McCarty 3 years, Adam Deeds and Marshall Hespe 2 years and Devon Conley 1 year.

Cheyenne County Emergency Manager Ryan Murray followed with a presentation detailing the different emergency calls these EMT and Firemen respond to, with a focus on the importance of community involvement, partner-

ships, planning, and direction of the future of emergency service training for Cheyenne County.

McDonald resident Les Loker, Chris Howard from Bird City, and Stan Kibell from Goodland with Midwest Energy literally illuminated the EMT building with their presentation on the danger of, and how to avoid injury from electricity. During this presentation, Mr. Loker demonstrated how different elements are affected by electrical contact, using various objects, such as wood, a glove with a hole in it, a grapefruit, a helium balloon, a piece of rubber tire, a rope, and several other common items that work as conductors. Using a long pole, these trained linemen raise these objects to the power line carrying 7200 volts of electricity, and demonstrate how common objects work as magnets, and are drawn to the condensers to make contact that burns the object. Les Loker demonstrated the proper way to get to safety in the event you are in the car and come upon an area where a power line is down on the ground.

Midwest Energy has trailers in Colby and Hays that are set up with dummies constructed from PVP pipe, wearing rubber gloves, a steel helmet, and a large light for the head. The dummies are wired, and using long poles to make contact, various body parts and items are burned to illustrate the hazards of electricity and the importance of handling electricity safely.

Using these trailers, experienced linemen have conducted these demonstrations in schools all over Kansas and Nebraska, to over 10,000 people yearly, teaching safety is important regardless of age.

Les Loker and his team have given this presentation to the former Governor of Kansas and several members of congress, as well as the Kansas State Troopers. Over 70,000 people have attended these natural gas, propane and electric safety presentations in the past 15 years. "We make these presentations with the hope of saving persons and adults serious injury or death," said Les Loker. "If we can save just one life, the efforts are priceless."



DURING THE MIDWEST demonstration at the fundraiser, Chris Howard uses a piece of rope to conduct electricity from a high voltage wire into a dummy.

Times staff photo by Norma Martinez.

County Sheriff speaks at fundraiser

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In conjunction with the Emergency Responders Fundraiser, Sheriff Cody Beeson reminisced on his recollections of the fire department, and spoke on the present emphasis being placed on Emergency Services. Modern technology advertises tools that will end all crime, but in reality, most agencies can't afford them, and obviously we will still have crime, he said, and in the emergency field the best resource is in the intelligence, ability, and courage of the responders. Before looking into the future, it's necessary to pause and look to the past to find a solution to future problems.

Reflecting on his fond memories as a child, Beeson said, "My father was a Bird City fireman when I was growing up, and I spent lots of time at the fire department." Back then, the fire trucks were yellow instead of the traditional red, he said, and he has memories of riding on his fathers lap as he drove the big International rural 2 fire truck in a parade at age two. As a school child, he remembers Hal Sager showing his class around, and spraying water out of the hose. The kids were excited about the rainbow effect from the water, but he was more interested in the big International fire truck. He knew then - he wanted to drive that big yellow truck and be a fire fighter.

As time went on, a new fire station was built, and fire phones

and the siren were replaced with pagers and radios. His desire to be a fire man did not change after attending college and marrying, so he joined the Bird City Fire Force. He still remembers the first time he went to the Emergency Building, put on his gear, and was told to get into any truck. There it was...Rural 2... the big yellow International Fire Truck. "There was no way," he said, "I was going to go to my first fire in any other truck." Between Dave Hickert and him, with his big smile, he didn't think there was room for anyone else to ride in that truck. "I was four years old when this big yellow truck was built, and it still serves the people in Cheyenne County today," he said.

When emergency services was first started in Bird City, the fireman's purpose was self explanatory - to put wet stuff on red stuff. "The EMS was to take care of you," he said, "and the sheriff rode around on his horse to keep the peace. Today these two departments have blended together, and represent the community as 'first responders.'"

Through the years, especially after the 9/11 attack, terrorist attacks and agro-terrorism, technology, and training have been enhanced. Previous sheriff's did not have to worry about protecting the farmer and rancher's cattle and the nation's food supply from being attacked by a foreign animal disease attack. Once the United States intelligence found this to be a threat, the state of

Kansas took action to protect it's food supply. Previous sheriff's did not have to worry about this sort of protection.

In today's society, the old fashioned 911 calls do not serve the needs of the population and the standards and policies of organizations striving to fit into new and changing government regulations.

Today's technology needed by emergency responders is expanding. At the sheriff's office, they are being forced to change their procedures and techniques for fingerprinting suspects. The sheriff's office, Mr. Beeson says, still uses the old fashioned ink and ten print card systems, and are the last to give up this system mainly because of the cost. Live scan digital fingerprints are instantly sent via the internet, and are matched in a short amount of time. The results are faster, and provide a safer community by speeding up the time in catching those who are wanted for crimes or comparing prints to prints found at crime scenes. Sheriff Beeson says, "It will not be long until Cheyenne county is forced to have this system in place."

Using the comparisons of the unimaginable disasters of airplanes flying into buildings on 9/11, he related how unexpected it was for a bomber plane to blow up in the skies over Bird City when folks woke to cut wheat that day. Beeson says emergency responders never know what lies ahead, and they have to be

equipped, trained, and provided with updated equipment in case of future similar events.

Bird City, having the Emergency Building with ample space dedicated to a training room for first responders, shows the community's commitment to have the best responders they can. Sheriff Beeson asked those who were gathered around the tables used for training and planning sessions to look at the volunteers as a sheep dog. "I want you to imagine the room as the shepherd," he says. "The sheep dog has a shepherd to lead it, but when the wolf attacks, it must respond regardless, if the shepherd is there with it or not. It must react partly out of instinct, but also from what the shepherd has taught it."

This emergency response room is where CPR is taught, the fire-fighter is taught to put on the proper gear to enter that 700 degree inferno, deputies are taught to identify meth labs, and young children are forged into not just being responders but into leaders. His final words were: With the importance of a strong emergency service to the community and a constant need for people who can step up the ladder and all the talk about ability, technology and preparedness, the future of emergency service happens where the rubber meets the road, where the hands work, where the sweat is poured. The future of emergency services is in us. It is in the children we raise and in the community we build.



ROD YOUNG grills the barbecued pork chops in the cold 20 degree temperatures.

Times staff photo by Norma Martinez.

Event set in Bird City

By Amanda Miller

This year's Cheyenne County July Fourth Celebration will be held in Bird City. The planning committee chose to move the celebration from St. Francis, and will be using the park, Scout Hut, thresher show grounds, and are seeking permission from Century II to use their facilities.

Rodney Neitzel gave a long presentation to the Bird City City Council at the last meeting, and asked permission to change the location. The request was unanimously approved.

This year the proposed celebration would kick off at 9:30 a.m. in the park. The Bird City Fire Department will be giving fire truck rides to children of all ages, and the firemen will be at the gate greeting everyone as they arrive. At the Bird City Library, children can enjoy wagon rides.

The July 4th Celebration will have the kid's red, white and blue parade for everyone to participate in, like past years. There will also be an All-American hot dog meal and for those serious hot dog enthusiasts, a hot dog eating contest will be held at noon.

The Bird City swimming pool will host a "Free on the Fourth" swim party, and a cake and ice cream social will be held at the American Legion.

That evening, a DJ with music and an open mic will entertain. The thresher show grounds plan to have the school house, country church, sod house and museum open for tours presenting the history of Cheyenne County. Concession stands will be provided, and all the proceeds from all the concession stands and other events will go towards paying for the fireworks.

The grand finale fireworks display will be set off at the thresher grounds. Beginning just before 10 p.m. and lasting about half an hour, the spectacular red, white and blue fireworks will be set to patriotic music for the whole community to enjoy.

All of these plans are proposed, and the committee is hoping to gather the support to make it happen! The celebration is possible thanks to donations and sales during the celebration. Anyone wishing to drop off donations can do so at Hometown Market.



SHERIFF CODY BEESON discusses plans with Emergency Management Director Ryan Murray.

Times staff photo by Norma Martinez.