



WORKING THE FOOD STAND — Elizabeth and Rachel Kletz get the condiments ready for their shift at the 4-H food booth. Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

Cheyenne County fair over after another successful year

By Karen Krien
karen.k@nwks.com

The Cheyenne County Fair is over for another year. The 4-H'ers and their families, along with all the volunteers, carnival crew and fair board members, headed home Saturday, tired but knowing that it had been a good fair.

The temperatures were cool with a little mist during the horse show on Wednesday. However, it warmed up for the rest of the events, being close to 100 on Friday.

Carnival games and rides were busy all four nights of the fair. A few of the very large prizes went for bargain tokens and there were kids around the fairgrounds with a variety of lights, swords and stuffed animals, just to name a few.

The demolition derby drew the crowd during the fair. Clay Zimbelman, committee chairman, said it sold out again. There were 28 cars competing with St. Francis man, Ron Neitzel, raking in the first prize money of \$1,500. Second prize went to former St. Francis resident, Larry Steinbeck, now of McCook. Third prize went to Kelley Faylor and fourth to Denis Vandike. Denis also earned the Mad Dog award of \$500.

Top winners and winners of the heats were also awarded custom-made trophies by John Guthmiller, Ross Manufacturing, and Mr. Zimbelman.

New this year was the three-way point system with driver's points being tallied from Goodland, Colby and St. Francis. David Rose, St. Francis, with 80 points, won \$500; Keaton Frewen, St. Francis, was second with \$300; and Neal Thornburg, Goodland, was third and \$200.

This was the second year for the lawn mower pull contest. Thomas Douthit took first in the stock class, and Jakob Church, second in the modified class. Both are from St. Francis.

On Friday, Mario Mancini performed as Elvis and was an illusionist, escaping from many hand cuffs after being put into a mailbag. Victoria Halterman played the electric fiddle.

On Wednesday, the Kids' Rodeo was replaced by mutton bustin', barrel racing and team roping. This event was the Gary Grice and Carl Keller Memorial event. There were other contributors who added money to the pot, adding to the excitement of the show.

The mutton bustin' contest found a number of willing contestants and some hung onto the sheep's wool long enough to get part way across the arena.

The barrel racing found Brenda Delano, St. Francis, again winning first place, followed by Skye Howard from Arapahoe, Colo. Look for more information in upcoming issues of *The Herald and Times*.

The top three team roping winners were from Colorado and included: Wes Keller and Dan Kirchenslager winning first place and \$616; Justin Brandon and Wade Smith, second, \$462; Dwight Arnold and Wade Smith, third, \$308. From Goodland was the team of Zurick Labrien and John Herl, placing four and taking home \$154.

Saturday's parade was long with a number of entries. St. Francis' Main Street was lined with people



IVAN KEMP received grand champion on his pickling cucumbers at the fair. Times staff photo by Karen Krien

including lots of children just waiting for candy and other treats to be tossed their way.

The grand champion float went to the Bankwest, St. Francis. First in the organization/church division went to St. Francis Girl Scouts. In the business division, Stuart's Jewelry was the winner, and the White family took home the first prize in the family division.

The 4-H and open class results

along with articles and photos of the events and happenings at the fair will be inserted as the *After Fair* section in both *The Saint Francis Herald* and *Bird City Times* on Aug. 27.

The fair board and Amusement Authority members will be meeting within the next month to start planning next year's Cheyenne County Fair.

Hospital receives 'clean' audit

The Cheyenne County Hospital Board found that the hospital had a "clean" audit when they met on Thursday, July 23.

Dave Dellasega, chief financial officer for Great Plains Health Alliance, the company which leases the hospital, reported that the audit for the county hospital was a good audit. The standard letter that comes back from the auditors with the board, reported a "clean" audit.

He reminded the board that as a Critical Access hospital, having that status, gives up the ability to make a profit on Medicare patients because the hospital gets reimbursed their cost for service.

He reported that the number of full time employees in 2007 was 65.4 and was 65.2 in 2008 with the average labor rate at \$20.73 and \$23.06 respectively. This is driven by rate changes, not hours worked.

Cheyenne County Hospital is high in the number of full-time employees to the per adjusted occupied bed rate over the year. In 2007 it was 6.4 full-time equivalent and did go down some to 5.8 in 2008. The salaries went up 11.2 percent in 2008 and this would have been due to the hiring of providers.

The basic question, he said, becomes, "Does your cash flow from operations cover your expenses?" So generating cash from operations and being able to put money away is a good thing, he said, which the hospital board does a good job of funding their depreciation.

Great Plains did an extensive charge study to reduce costs to patients and improve the hospital's reimbursement. As a result, many charges will be decreased starting Aug. 1.

Administrator report
Les Lacy, hospital administrator, reported that he had brought operating expenses versus capital costs to the board at the last board meeting for a capital purchase, a Vitek, an automated microbiology instrument used in the lab which will help take out transcription errors and eliminate reagent quality control. The cost is \$32,006. The other bid was from MicroScan for \$26,925. The board agreed to purchase the Vitek from the Board's general account.

Reid Raile, St. Francis, was hired as the network administrator.

Robert Stiles was at the hospital regarding the Primary Care Clinic grant and was pleased with the progress.

Dr. Rainwater, cardiologist from Denver, is already going to Colby and is also planning on coming to St. Francis.

Insurance benefits
Employee health insurance benefits were discussed at length. The general consensus was that further action needed to be taken to share the burden of this year's premium growth for

health insurance. While a number of options and issues were discussed, two ideas emerged as potential action for immediate implementation. First, the hospital would increase its support for the employee health insurance benefit to split the rate of increase. For example, add \$100 over what was stipulated by Great Plains. The second issue might yield two free office visits for hospital employees and/or their families.

The input from the board and medical staff will be evaluated and the board will be advised of actions taken to address concerns expressed during the meeting.

Statistics
In the physician volume, the numbers showed Dr. Miller as strong and the others are holding their own. Tyler Raile's, physician assistant, numbers are lower as he was out due to his surgery. The clinic volume at both clinics was strong.

The lab continues to have strong numbers as does the radiology services. The newborn numbers show 11 babies born and seven more planned through December for a total of 18 born at the hospital. The first quarter for babies in 2010 is filling up and Dr. Allard said it is people from here and some from the surrounding area.

The lifeline program is staying strong at 48 in the community.

County health
The county health numbers are steady. Mila Bandel, county health nurse, continues to monitor the county employee's health status for their county wellness program. The Diabetes support group continues to meet monthly. Amanda Jensen, assistant, is keeping busy with the Healthy Start Home visits.

The health department is focusing on public relations this summer gearing up for the fall activities. They are working on a new brochure and new packets of programs that are offered in county health. The health department will be starting the case management activities, contacting patients for primary wellness exams and assisting with education, compliance, and helping them navigate the system for necessary procedures.

Great Plains Health Alliance
Jackie John, area director for Great Plains Health Alliance, reported that health reform is a big topic. She said that critical access hospitals such as the Cheyenne County Hospital, will continue to be paid for its cost of service. However, the disproportionate share reimbursement may be reduced.

Dr. Miller asked whether there is a chance of stopping the critical access hospital status. Mrs. John said this was not likely, that one of the big pushers for critical access hospitals is a Democratic senator that represents a large rural population.

Mrs. John said that the organization's data center has selected a new product, "Netwerkes." It will provide a web-based claims processor along with many other new tools that will be helpful. The Great Plains hospitals are currently being migrated to this new system.

In other business

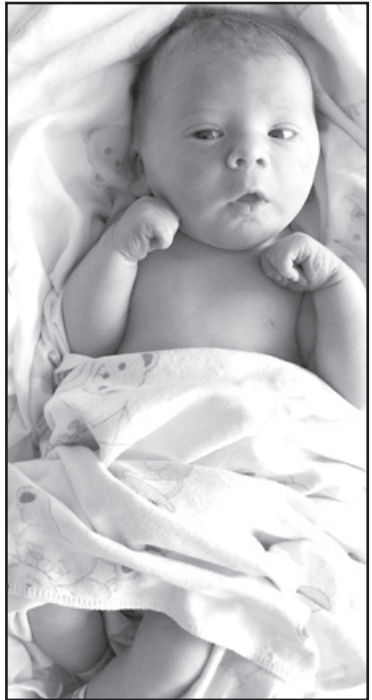
In other business:
• Dave Barber, with the rural development for the United States Department of Agriculture out of the Hays office, presented a Community Facilities program where the board can apply for a direct loan or a guaranteed loan.

• Department heads, Erika Zimbelman, clinic manager; and Amelia Zuege, outpatient services and surgery manager, gave reports on their departments.

• The board voted to pay an invoice of \$2,800 to GMCN, architect, for work done so far on the proposed building addition.

Next meeting
There were conflicts with the regular August date so the next meeting will be Thursday, Sept. 3 in the basement meeting room in the St. Francis Clinic.

Editor's note: The above article was taken from the unapproved minutes of the Cheyenne County Hospital Board's July 23 meeting.



Elise Lee Haack

Introducing

Bryan and Carolyn Haack, Chicago, Ill., announce the birth of a new daughter, Elise Lee Haack, 6 pounds, 15 ounces, on July 17, 2009. Elise is welcomed home by her 2-year-old sister, Sadie.

Grandparents are Roger and Sharon Haack, Lawrence, and Jim and Linda Tailon, Hammond, Ind. Great-grandparents are Vernetta Haack of Bird City and the late Norman Haack, and Robert and Laura Lee Jones, Bella Vista, Ark.

Cheylin Recreation Commission is wanting to hire an activity director. The job would include organizing, scheduling and implementing year round recreation programs. For more information, please call Belinda Serrano at 785-734-2754. Please send letter of application and resume to Cheylin Recreation Commission, PO Box 187, Bird City, Ks. 67731. Applications need to be received by September 1, 2009.

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Benkelman: July 23rd & 30; Aug. 6 at DCH lab (starting at 6 a.m.)

Haigler: Aug. 4th at the Haigler Ambulance Barn (6 - 10 a.m.)

Stratton: July 22nd & 29th at the Stratton Clinic (6 - 10 a.m.)

All times are local times.

If you are unable to make the dates above, please call for an appointment.

For the accuracy of the test, you will need to be fasting (nothing to eat or drink) for 12 hours. *Payment is due at the time of service. This may not and will not be billed to your insurance, Medicare or wellness plan and may not be applied to your deductible.*

Please call Dundy County Hospital at 308-423-2204 ext 229 if you have questions.

Dundy County Hospital

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