

Food booth ready

By Karen Krien

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The sights, the sounds and the smells of the fairgrounds during the Cheyenne County Fair are memorable. The clatter of the carnival rides, the sounds of contented cattle, the entertainment in front of the grandstands, whether it be music or derby bashes, all mixed with the smell of a cheeseburger coming from the 4-H food booths are remembered as soon as a foot is set on the grounds.

To some, coming to eat at the fair is a once-a-year tradition; to others, it is the convenience of having something to eat between the sheep show and the cow show.

The 4-H food booths are a necessity to people who are participating because they cannot get home or to a restaurant to eat.

Organizing and running the 4-H Council food booth this year is Linda Ketzner. Linda has years of experience in the food business including being an executive chef. She has organized kitchens and cooking to serve up to 700 people three times a day.

For years, her children were in 4-H and now, she is giving back to the 4-H'ers and communities by running the food stand. Not only will there be better organization but there will be a whole new menu.

"It is exciting and I'm looking forward to working with the kids," she said. "It is an opportunity to teach the kids safety as well as sanitation."

The day starts early for many of the 4-H'ers, their families and other people entering items. Opening at 7 a.m., there will be a speciality breakfast burrito made with fried potatoes, Italian sausage, sautéed peppers and onions, scrambled eggs and cheese. This speciality breakfast can be enjoyed not only by fairgoers but by the public is looking for a different place to have breakfast.

When she was planning the menu, she asked her mother, Dottie Schnieder, who ran restaurants in the area most of her



STOCKING THE FOOD BOOTH with supplies are Joslyn Ketzner and Linda Ketzner.

Herald photo by Karen Krien

life, what would be a special item. Dottie immediately said, why not the Woodshed hamburger which includes sautéed onions and pizza cheese. Also from her mother's menu will be her potato salad and macaroni salad.

Other items on the menu are a variety of hamburgers, chicken sandwiches, double whoppers, walking tacos, sausage on a stick, chicken noodle soup, chicken wings, cowboy beans, homemade pies, triple chocolate cookies, carrot cake, brewed iced tea and frozen lemonade.

Linda has donated the industrial stove and Riverside Recreation is loaning a steam table. Rod Klepper donated a sink but lacking time to remodel, it will be put in next year. Linda and her granddaughter, Joslyn Ketzner, cleaned the entire area and have been stocking the kitchen with supplies.

Ms. Ketzner donated two awnings, one which will be over the walk-up window on the east side of the building. This will give quick service to those wanting beverages and appetizers.

The stand will be open 7 a.m. to closing time on Wednesday through Friday. On Saturday, the stand opens at 4:30 p.m. to closing.

Lawn Ridge 4-H booth

Located to the west of the 4-H Council food booth is the Lawn Ridge 4-H Club booth. Lawn Ridge is known for its pork burgers and there is generally a line waiting for them.

Other items on the menu include hamburgers, hot dogs and brats, macaroni salad, baked beans and homemade pies.

Not only are 4-H'ers found working in the food booths, but entire families show up to work. In year's past, former 4-H'ers have also put in time, knowing how often extra help is needed.

The food booths are the main money maker for the year. Often the money is used for community services. The 4-H Council uses the money to help fund camps and trips as well as the Discovery Days event. This year, plans for recruiting 4-H'ers are in the air.

Long-term care forum held

The Community Builders hosted the first of two forums in Bird City Monday evening, regarding long-term care, prior to the special election on Aug. 2. About 40 people were in attendance to hear presentations from eight people and ask questions and make statements.

Randy Fitzgerald of the Good Samaritan Society, spoke first and gave facts and figures to answer many questions being asked by county residents. He stated that the total calculated insurance loss following the fire at the Village in October was \$678,000. After a deductible of \$100,000 and other depreciation adjustments, the insurance payout was \$485,000.

Last fall, following the fire, the Good Samaritan Society paid \$250,000 to Village employees due to the loss of their jobs. Following the public forum last fall, he was impressed with the county's interest in getting the displaced residents back to St. Francis and the employees back to work as quickly as possible.

He convinced the corporate office in Sioux Falls, S.D., to work with Cheyenne County to achieve that goal in spite of the fact that some executives of the Good Samaritan Society were ready to close the facility after the fire.

The renovation of the existing west wing cost the Society \$82,000. Luckily the kitchen was undamaged and was fully operational. The estimated cost to restore the damaged east/west corridor is \$491,000.

That construction is in progress and plans are to have it completed by the end of the year. Mr. Fitzgerald had previously stated and again stated the society would continue as they had for 50 years to own and operate the facility for a year following the completion of the renovations.

Stage 2 renovations are planned to be completed by Dec. 31. As of June of this year the society has incurred an operating loss of \$235,000 since it reopened in March of 2011, even though the month of May showed a slight profit. Mr. Fitzgerald believes the facility will be operating in the black once the Stage 2 renovation is completed with 35-beds.

Mr. Fitzgerald explained that the Good Samaritan Society does not wish to continue to own the Cheyenne County facility with a predominance of double-occupancy rooms, as residents now and in the future are requesting and expecting single occupancy rooms with up-to-date amenities.

Good Samaritan Society's business expertise is focused on resident care, personnel management and keeping up-to-date with all the government and health regulations. However, Cheyenne County, with its vested interest in its future, can obtain the existing facility with out-of-pocket, no-capital expenditure and could renovate and add to it in the future depending on the needs of the aged.

If the vote on Aug. 2 is favorable, by a simple majority, our elected county commissioners will have the authority to negotiate a 5-year lease with the Good Samaritan Society. Negotiations can begin after the election and must be completed before December 2012, a period of approximately 16 months. When and if a lease is signed, the Society will give to the county the property for \$1. That property consists of the long-term care facility, equipment and furnishings, the apartments and surrounding acreage all valued at about \$2 million.

The ballot on Aug. 2 states: "Shall the County of Cheyenne County, Kansas, levy a tax not to exceed six (6) mills for a home for the aged?" An affirmative vote allows the county commissioners to negotiate a favorable lease for the county. If a lease cannot be negotiated with the Society, then the commissioners have not bound the county to any financial obligation to the Good Samaritan Society. Other options would then be pursued.

Mr. Fitzgerald indicated that he expected one of the negotiation points to be profit sharing between the Society and

the county. He stated that is a negotiable point.

If the vote passes and if a lease contract is negotiated, then the county's responsibilities will be to maintain the buildings, and grounds and make any physical improvements deemed necessary by the county.

Mr. Fitzgerald reminded those present that the gifting of a \$2 million asset to the county was contingent on the signing of a lease document with the Good Samaritan Society.

The county commissioners and Mr. Fitzgerald were questioned whether any third parties had made inquiries regarding purchasing the facility or building a new facility. Both replied that they have received no such inquiries.

Also speaking to the group on Monday evening were Dr. Mary Beth Miller, Mike Bandel, Troy Hilt, Rod Klepper, Lynn Glasco, Ernie Ketzner, Dale Patton and Les Lacy. All their comments related to the fact that by obtaining ownership of the Village financial obligation will be incurred, but the investment in the future will insure our ability to keep our family members at home in Cheyenne County. Sustaining long-term care is vital to the viability of the hospital, medical clinic, downtown businesses, schools and essentially a way of life we enjoy in this corner of the Kansas frontier.

A few questions were asked and answered. The commissioners stated that money is tight but they do their best to allocate the money given them by the taxpayers, in the best interest of the entire county.

It was explained by all the presenters that a favorable vote on Aug. 2 puts Cheyenne County in control of their future in regards to continuum care for the elderly. A no vote leaves the county's future in the hands of the Good Samaritan Society with the present facilities, or whatever is to follow.

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