

Legislative News

By Ward Cassidy,
120th District Rep.

In my last article, I mentioned that there would be changes coming to the Kansas Medicaid program. This past Wednesday, Governor Brownback announced his plan to help our state work with the increased costs of this program.

What is Medicaid? It is a 46-year-old care program for the very poor, elderly, and disabled. It is jointly funded by the federal and state governments, but managed by the states. In 2011, Medicaid served over 65 million Americans.

Medicaid is the largest source of health care for children. It also serves close to 9 million non-elderly people with disabilities, among them 4 million children with mental illness. There are also 8 million low-income seniors (who also qualify for Medicare) included. Also covered are low-income pregnant women through the duration of their pregnancy.

The controversial Affordable Care Act (Obama Care)—which the Kansas Legislature passed a resolution last session to join other states in protesting) calls for the federal government to pick up all medical costs for newly eligible Medicaid enrollees for three years, beginning in 2014. Kansas will be required to pay for a share of the costs after that, topping out at

10 percent by 2020. We will also be required to pay for the “matching rate,” which ranges from 20- to 50-percent of medical costs.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2014, all uninsured Americans with incomes up to 133 percent of federal poverty guidelines will qualify for Medicaid. Using the law’s required method to calculate income, a family of four who have an income of \$30,800 or less will qualify.

Because our economy is struggling, it will only add more people to the Medicaid roles. This will hurt our state budget even more. As it is, Medicaid has grown at an average of seven percent a year for the last 10 years.

I have been to meetings the past few weeks on immigration, school funding, the problems of electrical power in Kansas, over-crowded prisons, and Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERs). I will keep our area up-to-date on these critical issues as I learn more.

I appreciate all the positive comments people have given me about my efforts to represent Northwest Kansas and working to keep people informed. Send e-mails to ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov.

Fair board lack members, few decisions were made

By Karen Krien
karen.k@nwkansan.com

The Cheyenne County Fair Board met Thursday but with only five members present. Five members was not enough for a quorum and not enough to make any decisions with the exception of paying the regular bills.

Consequently, there were only a few issues discussed. President Dick Bursch said some of the matters that needed to be voted on at the November meeting included a theme for next year’s fair, the parade marshal and a behavior policy.

Brian Hobrock, board member,

said Deb George had asked him if the fair board had approved paying her for the embroidery work she did on bags used as prizes for livestock winners.

Mr. Bursch said he thought she had been paid because that bill had been approved early in August. It must have been overlooked, he said, and noted that she should be paid shortly.

Marty Fear, county extension agent, had some questions dealing with the 2012 fair rule book but since there were not enough members to make a decision, he would talk about rules at the December meeting.

Agent Fear said that he had talked to the PDC and extension council about the proposed grievance committee which would include two fair board members, two extension office members and two members from the Program Development Committee. President Bursch said he thought the board needed to consider having money put down before a matter would come to the grievance committee. That will be decided at a later date.

Weeds at the fairgrounds

At the October meeting, the weeds and sand burs surrounding the exhibit building had been brought to the board’s attention. The commissioners had suggested that the board hire someone to spray and mow the grounds. Mr. Bursch said he had looked at the area and suggested that they put rocks in several different places

where weeds and sand burs seem to be hard to control.

We put rocks around the back side of the grandstand and then spray, he said. It seems to have solved the problem in that area.

He said he could bring in a load of rock for \$475 to \$525. This matter will be brought to the next meeting.

Pasturing the north part of the fairgrounds was discussed along with the need of a roof on the rest room north of the grandstands, light switch for the exhibit building and possibly installing a garage door in Jenkins Hall.

The events for the nights during the fair will be tabled until the next meeting. The only event that is set is the demolition derby which will be held Saturday night.

After-fair special section

After fair section put out by the newspaper was discussed. There was a misunderstanding about who put out the section. The fair board has two full-page ads in the section, one thanking the volunteers helping with the fair, and the other is the premium sale buyers. Nick Ketzner, board member, said that if funds were short, maybe they should not put these ads in. No decision was made.

Next meeting

Because there were not enough members to make any decisions and there were a lot of issues to be discussed, there will be a meeting at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 1, in the commissioners’ room in the courthouse.

Across the County

By Marty Fear
Extension agent

In the aftermath of an Oct. 29 grain elevator explosion in Atchison, Kan. that claimed six lives and injured two others, Kansas State University grain scientist, Leland McKinney said that while grain and other kinds of dust can be dangerous, steps can be taken to reduce risk. “It’s a real tragedy. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the people who are affected by this,” he said.

McKinney answered questions relating to grain dust explosions.

Why do explosions happen sometimes in grain storage facilities?

McKinney: Several factors must be present for a grain dust explosion to occur. They all have to be present at the same time. These conditions are: 1) an ignition source, such as a hot bearing, welding or cutting; 2) an adequate concentration of low moisture grain dust; 3) the grain dust is in suspension; 4) the presence of oxygen; and 5) the ignition of the grain dust in an enclosure, such as an elevator.

Removing any of those factors reduces the likelihood of a grain dust explosion.

What can grain storage facilities do to minimize the risk of explosions?

McKinney: Grain storage facilities can reduce their risk of a grain dust explosion with good housekeeping practices to reduce grain dust levels and by installing monitoring devices on equipment to detect overheating of bearings.

Most primary explosions occur in a bucket elevator (leg). For that reason, modern facilities are designed with the leg on the outside of the facility in order to reduce risk. Older facilities were built with the leg inside.

The cleanliness of the facility is also a factor. Most of the destruction in a grain dust explosion is caused by secondary explosions, or a series of explosions, that occur through the facility. It’s important that grain elevators have a good housekeeping program so that they keep the concentration of dust down and be very aware of any points where ignition may occur.

OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) has recognized that this (grain dust) is a potential workplace hazard, and has grain handling standards in the regulations that address precautions that need to be taken. They address cleanliness of the facility and other hazards that occur in grain handling facilities.

Do these kinds of explosions happen often?

McKinney: During the 10-year period 1995-2005, there was an average of 10.5 explosions per year, according to statistics compiled by Robert Schoeff, professor emeritus here at K-State. He is now retired, but he devoted a major portion of his career toward collecting statistics and finding out why grain dust explosions occur. He was an internationally-recognized expert on the subject and his work resulted in a sharp decline in the number of explosions annually. That work included annual reports from 1980 to 2005 (K-State Research and Extension website: http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/historic-publications/Dust_Exp.htm).

Are we seeing more grain storage facility explosions than we used to?

McKinney: The highest frequency of grain dust explosions occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s. A lot of fact finding went on at that time.

Does it make a difference what kind of grain is stored?

McKinney: All grain dust can

be explosive given the conditions described earlier are met. Other kinds of dust can be explosive. I believe it was in 2009, there was a sugar mill that exploded in Georgia. Other kinds of dust, when suspended and there’s a source of ignition, can cause a fire or an explosion.

Does low atmospheric humidity cause dust explosions?

McKinney: There’s no data that indicate that low atmospheric humidity causes dust explosions.

Can high atmospheric humidity prevent dust explosions?

McKinney: There’s also no data that indicate that high atmospheric humidity prevents dust explosions.

Is there more danger of an explosion in one type of construction – wood, steel or concrete – compared to others?

McKinney: No, there is no evidence to support that the type of construction makes a difference in grain dust explosions.

Could this kind of accident happen in smaller, on-farm grain handling facilities?

McKinney: I would say any time you have a situation where you have an ignition source and grain dust, there’s the potential for a flash fire or an explosion.

“You have to stay on top of your maintenance and housekeeping and always have safety on your mind in whatever industry you’re in,” the grain scientist said.

Information about grain processing, including how to obtain a video, “Deadly Dust,” is available on the K-State Department of Grain Science and Industry website: www.grains.ksu.edu. Till next week - Marty

Club Clip

Community Club

The Bird City Community Club met Nov. 7 at the senior center and the following members were in attendance: Stan and Dee Dorsch, Rod Klepper, Brad and Barbara Waters, Mike and Dona McGilvray, Gary and Merilie Leach, Donna Wright, Hulda Dorsch, Bonnie Burr, Larry Shults, Helen Frisbie, Cathy Loop and Doug and Karen Flemming.

President Leach called the meeting to order. The secretary’s minutes and the treasurer’s report were both approved as read.

Hulda asked for help from the club members for the Thanksgiving supper to be held Nov. 19 with bingo to follow. Members will help with set-up, serving and desserts.

Discussion was then held on Santa Day to be held Dec. 17. Members signed up for duties and food to bring.

Dec. 22 will be a community hay ride and Christmas caroling with hot chocolate to follow. The singfest will begin at 7 p.m.

Members were asked to help decorate the town square for Christmas and help put in the furnace ducts at the Senior Center when they had some time. The club gave a donation to the Center for letting them have meetings there.

We will invite the Christmas choir and TFC members to help us with the song fest.

Meeting adjourned and the next meeting will be held on Dec 12 at 7 p.m. at the Senior Center and everyone is invited to attend the meeting.

Association makes plans for Kansas Day

The planning meeting for the 2012 Kansas Day Celebration, which will fall on a Sunday, was held Tuesday evening Nov. 8, at 619 West First St. The meeting was called to order by President Helene Landenberger. Since minutes were not recorded by last years officers, none were available to be read. Treasurer, Marsha Magley reported the balance on hand and the bills that were allowed for last years event. The theme will be “Sunday on the Prairie”, and the program will be “Prairie Churches Re-

membered.” Various persons will be contacted to talk about Churches they know about, have ancestors that were instrumental in forming congregations, preached in or any other points of interest, not to exceed five minutes per presentation. Vice President Marilyn Magley will assist the president in checking with standing committees in the Bird City community and other arrangements for the days activities. Coffee and cookies were served and the meeting was adjourned.

Public Notice

Petition of issuance filed in district court

First published in The Saint Francis Herald, St. Francis, Kansas Thursday, November 3, 2011. (44, 45, 46)

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF CHEYENNE COUNTY, KANSAS
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF

HELEN I. BROWN, DECEASED. CASE NO. 11-PR-

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are hereby notified that on October 28, 2011, a Petition for Issuance of Letters of Administration was filed in this Court by Christine M. Rocca, heir of Helen I. Brown, deceased.

All creditors of the decedent are notified to exhibit their demands against the Estate within the latter of four months from the date of first publication of notice under K.S.A. 59-2236 and amendments thereto, or if the identity of the creditor is known or reasonably ascertainable, 30 days after actual notice was given as provided by law, and if their demands are not thus exhibited, they shall be forever barred.

Christine M. Rocca, Petitioner

APPROVED BY:

JAMES M. MILLIKEN, CHARTERED
Kari M. Gilliland, #17386
101 W. Washington, P.O. Box 627
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Petition filed in court for the Keller Estate

First published in The Saint Francis Herald, November 17, 2011.

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF CHEYENNE COUNTY, KANSAS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF

VINTA KELLER, Deceased. CASE NO. 11-PR-18

NOTICE OF HEARING

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are hereby notified that a petition has been filed in this Court by Melvin John Keller, duly appointed, qualified and acting Executor of the Estate of Vinta Keller, deceased, praying Petitioner’s acts be approved; account be settled and allowed; the heirs be determined; the Will be construed and the Estate be assigned to the persons entitled thereto; the Court find the allowances requested for attorneys’ fees and expenses are reasonable and should be allowed; the costs be determined and ordered paid; the administration of the Estate be closed; upon the filing of receipts the Petitioner be finally discharged as the Executor of the Estate of Vinta Keller, deceased, and the Petitioner be released from further liability.

You are required to file your written defenses thereto on or before the 12th day of December, 2011, at 1:30 p.m. in the District Court, in St. Francis, Cheyenne County, Kansas, at which time and place the cause will be heard. Should you fail therein, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon the petition.

Melvin John Keller, Executor

JAMES M. MILLIKEN, CHARTERED
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(785) 332-2101
Attorney for Executor

Grandparent scam reaches St. Francis

By Karen Krien
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Imagine getting a call about one of your grandchildren. The caller says he or she is traveling overseas, has been arrested, and needs money for bond.

Many grandparents would be sympathetic to this situation and would want to do what they can to help their grandkids out in a crisis.

In St. Francis, out in the northwest corner of Kansas, most people don’t think about this affecting them in any way. However, Virginia Feidler, St. Francis, got one of those calls.

“I played right into their hand,” she said.

She had received a call from a sobbing, frantic-sounding girl who called her “Grandma” and said she had ended up in jail in Niagra Falls. Mrs. Feidler said she made her first mistake by calling the person on the phone, “January,” her granddaughter’s name.

“She was convincing,” Mrs. Feidler said but, in the back of her mind, she was wondering why January was in Niagra Falls as it would have been unusual for her to go that far without at least saying something about it.

Now, the caller had the name “January.” I didn’t think about it until after I had hung up. Mrs. Feidler said. Mrs. Feidler had been instructed to call a Peter Morgan in Niagra Falls, Canada. She called, thinking this was the lawyer. He told her that she should contact another number to make the payment. In the meantime, Mrs. Feidler decided to make a call to January.

No, January wasn’t in jail but was at home.

At first, Mrs. Feidler said she was so mad she just threw the phone number away but, then she got to thinking about it, so called Mr. Morgan back. The number was no longer in service.

She called the Kansas attorney general’s office and gave them the information. She had to dig the number out of the trash but, she said, they were glad to have the information. They wanted to know, she said.

Had she sent the money, it would have gone out of the country to Canada. There is no way of getting this money back.

Some grandparents end up wiring several thousand dollars to a foreign account before they find out their grandson or granddaugh-

ter has been safe at home the entire time, said Derek Schmidt, attorney general.

They have just fallen victim to a common scam.

This scam has been around for a long time, the attorney general said, but the scam artists are becoming more sophisticated. Information available on Internet sites, such as Facebook, makes it easier for scammers to find out enough information about someone to sound believable to a grandparent – just another reminder to be careful about what you share on social networking sites and whom you share it with.

How to avoid becoming a victim

The best way to avoid becoming a victim of this scam is to be very skeptical of the caller’s story. While it can take a few different forms, the basic idea is the same. A grandchild is in a foreign country, and has been arrested, mugged or otherwise lost his or her money. He or she needs some wired right away so he or she can get home.

Often the caller will ask the grandparent not to tell other family members because he doesn’t want his or her parents to find out. However, it is always best to check with another family member to make sure the caller actually is the grandchild he claims to be.

Another way to verify the identity of the caller is to ask personal information probably not available online, such as the name of a pet or favorite dish they have when they visit your house. In the unlikely event a grandchild really is stuck in a foreign country and needs money, he or she will probably be more than willing to answer a few personal questions.

Grandparents want to be there to help out their grandchildren in emergencies and times of need, and the scam artists know that. They have long sought to take advantage of good-natured people, especially senior citizens. Unfortunately, once money is wired to a foreign bank account, it is usually untraceable and almost impossible to get back. So be cautious and verify the caller actually is the grandson or granddaughter he or she claims to be.

Those called are urged to report a scam by calling our Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-432-2310 or visiting online at www.ksag.org.

Enjoy A Day of Thanks