



WELLNESS CENTER construction is underway. Students in Dennis Hengen's class are getting a lot of building experience. Pictured left to right are Josh Keltz, Dennis Hengen, Ty Carmichael and Connor Hazuka. Times staff photo by Tim Burr

## Board candidates interviewed

By Karen Krien  
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When the Cheyenne County Commissioners met on Wednesday, Feb. 15., there were two candidates interviewed for a seat on the hospital board. At the end of the meeting, the commissioners reviewed the interviews and re-appointed Jane Young.

Interviewing were Mrs. Young and Randy Smedstead. Mrs. Young has served on the board for four years. "Being on the board takes a while to learn. The longer I am on the board, the more effective I will be. Right now, we have a good and diverse board with different vocations and representations," said Mrs. Young.

Dale Patton, commissioner, asked how the Good Samaritan Village fire had impacted the hospital and how the hospital is doing now that the Village is nearly back to full capacity?

Mrs. Young said the fire had affected a lot of people in both St. Francis and Bird City. Projects were put on hold and the staff was put on a wage freeze.

Everyone wants the services, Mrs. Young said, and people are willing to do what they have to keep the services and business.

She gave a good report of Great Plains Health Alliance, the company which leases the hospital.

Andy Beikman, commissioner, said he had heard that a lot of the county's money is going to Great Plains. Do you feel like the board has input and the company is not totally in control of the hospital?

Mrs. Young said that Jackie John, area director for the company, attends the meetings and is there for input. Great Plains has done the accounting and services for many hospitals including the

Cheyenne County Hospital, she said, and is a good support system for the hospital.

"It would be hard to operate without them," she said. "We have a good hospital, good quality of care and the director of nurses is a compliment of how the hospital is run."

"We are fortunate to have these facilities and service in northwest Kansas."

**Randy Smedstead**

Mr. Smedstead said he had worked for the federal government for 36 years as a building technician in the post offices, most of them in Alaska. He was a building technician in 19 offices, noting that in Alaska, the postal service owns the buildings so they care about how they are kept up. He understands maintenance and what it takes to maintain a lot of the equipment.

He was an airplane mechanic in the Air Force and was a cook in the Army. While in Alaska, he was involved with special education programs, bringing students into the post office to train them in recycling.

After spending 13 years in Alaska, they moved to Cheyenne County to live in his wife, Dorothy's, grandfather's house.

He has worked as a maintenance person at the Good Samaritan Village. After his daughter's accident, he spends much of his time at home. He also teaches guitar and music to 36 students.

I have always had an interest in the hospital, Mr. Smedstead said. I know nursing care equipment and think I would be a valuable board member to help answer questions on what would make the hospital equipment better.

## Pastor leads grief support meeting

With the recent blizzard storm on Tuesday the Mutual Support Grief Group got off to a poor start. Everyone canceled out at the 2 p.m. group, but two showed up for the 7 p.m. group. A very rewarding and beneficial time was spent making it well worth Pastor Tom Bailey's time.

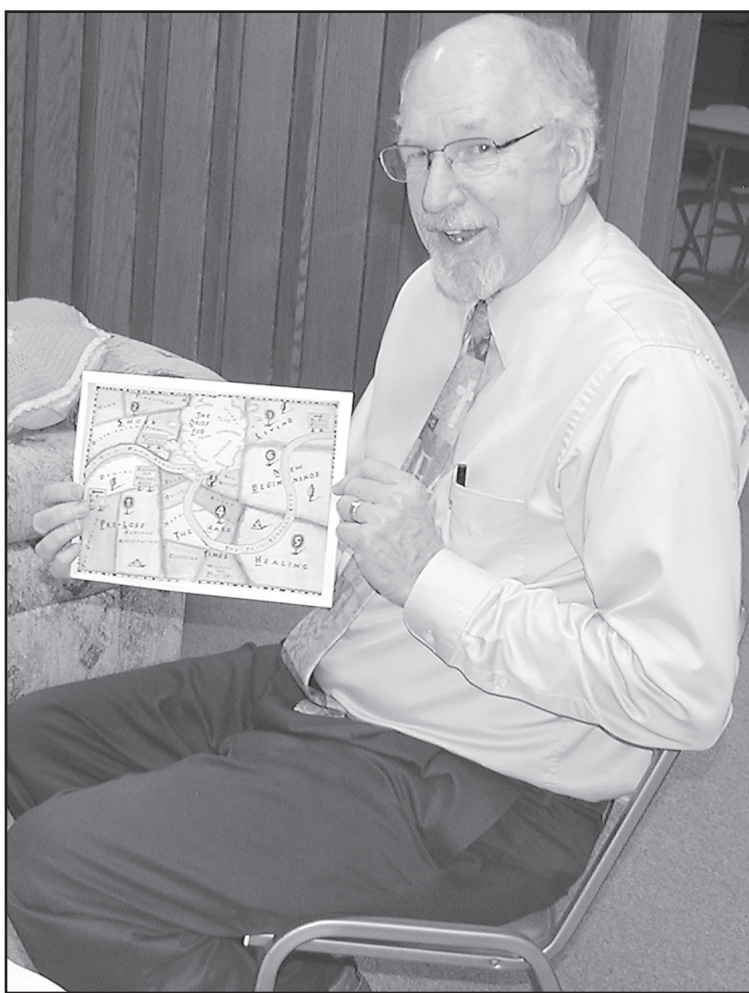
Pastor Tom has an extensive background working with dying, death and grief. He has been a pastor for 20 years, officiated more than 250 funerals, a hospice chaplain for 12 years, led numerous workshops and classes on end-of-life, given presentations to civic groups and churches on the funeral industry, and facilitated a large mutual support grief group in Kansas City. Pastor Tom is a graduate of the University of Wyoming, attended Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, did his Clinical Pastoral Residency at Saint Luke's Hospital in Kansas City, and completed his theological studies at Duke Divinity School in North Carolina. He said he was delighted to be appointed to Immanuel United Methodist Church in July 2011. He and his wife Debby make their

home in Bird City. They are all too familiar with loss and grief.

Pastor Tom says he is not an "expert" on grief; the true experts in the area of illness, dying, death, and bereavement are those who are experiencing illness, dying, and bereavement. When asked how he knows so much about grief, he replies, "I hang out with grievers."

As to his personal faith and beliefs in the Mutual Support Grief Group, he says, everyone's personal faith and church denomination will be honored and valued by the group. It will be diverse in everyone's spiritual background and knowledge, but unified in the purpose to the meetings where a compassionate God is present with everyone. Pastor Tom's group in Kansas City had 26 denominations as participants.

The mutual support group will meet twice a month for an hour and 15 minutes each time. The time and date has not been set, as Pastor Tom wants to set it on a day and time that will fit the attendee's schedules. He does plan on holding them both in the afternoon and evening to accom-



PASTOR TOM BAILEY explains the many avenues of grief during the during the support group meeting.

modate those who are working. Please contact Pastor Tom and let him know what times and days work best for you. Church

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## Influenza is still active in Cheyenne County

Influenza (flu) is still very active in Cheyenne County and throughout the U.S., said Mila Bandel, Cheyenne County Health nurse.

This influenza, she said, is hitting more of the younger adults to middle-aged adults. There have been fewer kids getting the flu unless they have been around parents who had this flu.

"This is why good hand washing and respiratory precautions are a must," she said.

The Center for Disease Control has reported the United States is seeing the latest flu season in nearly three decades. According to the influenza surveillance report "Flu View," flu activity in the United States increased for the week ending Feb. 4. The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for influenza nationally rose to 10.5 percent from 7.6 percent the prior week.

This is the first time this season that the percent of respiratory specimens testing positive for influenza has surpassed 10 percent, which is generally a marker to indicate that flu season is beginning. The Center for Disease Control recommends that if you haven't gotten vaccinated yet, you should get your vaccine now.

There are everyday prevention actions that people can take to help slow the spread of germs that cause respiratory illness, like the flu.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. This will block the spread of droplets from your mouth or nose that could contain germs. If a tissue is not available, use your arm to cough or sneeze into and not your hand.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-

based hand rub.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs spread this way.

- If you or your child gets sick with a respiratory illness, like flu, limit contact with others as much as possible to help prevent spreading illness. Stay home (or keep your child home) for at least 24 hours after fever is gone except to seek medical care or for other necessities. Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.

**How it spreads**

Flu viruses are thought to spread mainly from person to person through the coughing, sneezing, or talking of someone with the flu. Flu viruses also may spread when people touch something with flu virus on it and then touch their mouth, eyes, or nose. Many other viruses spread these ways too.

People infected with flu may be

able to infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to five to seven days after becoming sick. That means you may be able to spread the flu to someone else before you know you are sick. Young children, those who are severely ill, and those who have severely weakened immune systems may be able to infect others for longer than five to seven days.

If you get the flu, there are prescription antiviral drugs that can treat your illness., Mrs. Bandel said. Early treatment is especially important for the elderly, the very young, people with certain chronic health conditions, and pregnant women. Make an appointment with your health care provider for proper treatment.

Flu shots are still available. Contact the Cheyenne County Health Department for more information at 785-332-2381.



ASBESTOS tile is being removed from the Legion hall. Times staff photo by Norma Martinez

## Sub-state basketball starts on Monday

Sub-state basketball action starts on Monday, Feb. 27. St. Francis will participate in the Quinter Substate for the Class 1A, division 1 tournament, along with Hoxie, Osborne, Quinter, Stockton and Thunder Ridge. Cheylin will compete in the Class 1A, division 2

tournament Colby Substate, along with Triplains-Brewster, Golden Plains, Sharon Springs, Tribune and Weskan.

When the newspapers went to print, brackets nor times were available.