

Five top events for 2012

Each year, there are many things that happen throughout the year and 2012 was no exception. There are new businesses, people and groups receiving awards and many events of interest. Everybody has their opinion on what they think is important, said Karen Krien, publisher.

The Herald and Times staff came up with five topics they thought were the most important through the year. They included the continuing saga of the Good Samaritan Village ownership, the completion of the Cheyenne County Airport runway, the drought and how it affected the wheat and fall harvests, the completion of the Robinson-Griffin-Bacon Memorial building, along with the nearing completion of the Legion hall in Bird City, and opening of the new Prairie Land Electric Co-op east of St. Francis.

Good Samaritan Village

The Good Samaritan Society started in February visiting about the lease between the county commissioners and the Society. The Society said the Good Samaritan Village had been renovated back to where they felt it was sufficient but, was not back to the number of patient beds it had before the October 2010 fire. An open house was held to show the public the improvements.

Six weeks later, Randy Fitzgerald, the Society's director of operations, was unable to meet with the commissioners but said that the Society would not consider profit sharing with the county. However, they didn't want to have ownership of the facility. They offered the nursing home and the independent living apartments to the county for \$1. In exchange, they wanted a 5-year lease to run the nursing home, with the county picking up all expenses.

Ernie Ketzner, commissioner, said, the people have voted to subsidize the Village up to 6 mills (approximately \$200,000) a year. In 10 years, that is \$2 million. That would go a long way toward building a new facility.

Mr. Fitzgerald was at a May commissioners' meeting. He had a proposed lease. Dr. Mary Beth Miller was there, asking questions as to why three other area Good Samaritan Society facilities were operated with less money than the St. Francis facility. Mr. Fitzgerald said the Society never owned those buildings but the Society still owns the St. Francis property.

But, she said, why, after we (county) pay the dollar, are we being treated differently? It really isn't a gift because our lease is different?

Those facilities, Mr. Fitzgerald said, have historically done well. I thought we had done well, too, Dr. Miller said.

Mr. Fitzgerald said that he will be looking at the budgets of the three nursing homes mentioned earlier. We are not going to be wasting money, our administrators are held accountable, too.

Two weeks later, the lease between the county and Good Samaritan Society was not any further along. One of the main holdups was the lack of a proposed budget from the Society. We need to know why the society wants \$200,000 from Cheyenne County but others pay only \$20,000, said Andy Beikman, commissioner.

The commissioners had also heard that the Society wants 5 percent of the net revenue but this

has never been stated in writing.

Mr. Fitzgerald had said earlier that he would have a budget to the commissioners by June 15 so they would have it when making the county's budget in July.

At the Nov. 15 meeting, the commissioners met with over 60 people in the courtroom to hear what Mr. Fitzgerald and Jeff Paulsen, Good Samaritan Village administrator, were going to say.

The commissioners requested that the lease with the Society be reviewed every year and that a budget for the nursing home be presented to them by July 1. Also, the Society or nursing home administrator was to submit a monthly request for needed money.

The money appropriated to Society, Mr. Fitzgerald said, is for operations and capital support, and will be spent locally - it will not be going to the Society.

Your annual budget is your biggest financial statement, said Dale Patton, commissioner.

Mr. Fitzgerald said he will have the lease to the commissioners at the Nov 30 meeting and will be at the Dec. 17 meeting to hopefully sign the agreement.

We want to sign before the end of the year, Mr. Fitzgerald said, and, if that doesn't happen, the facility will not be closed.

Mr. Fitzgerald was unable to make it to the Dec. 17 meeting. However, Mr. Paulsen was there along with several board members and interested individuals. The commissioners had asked for a map showing where the property boundaries were and there was some legal wording that needed to be changed.

The Society said that, if the commissioners wanted to, the lease could be signed and they would make the necessary changes but the commissioners declined.

It will be after the first of the year before a lease between the Society and county will be signed.

Airport runway

The Cheyenne County Airport runway south of St. Francis was completed this summer. The new runway replaced the asphalt runway with concrete. It was made wider and longer.

Dave Yost, Airport Commission president, reported there was a change of plans when those using the equipment ran into solid rock. The Federal Aviation Administration approved a slight change in the plans and work will continue.

The runway project was made possible with a Federal grant which paid for 95 percent of the cost while the county paid for the other 5 percent.

The total cost of the project was around \$5 million with the county only paying \$250,000.

Harvest

The first load of wheat came in on June 9 - about two weeks ahead of most year's harvests. The hot, dry weather conditions had helped to ripen the wheat but had also done it's damage to many of the fields. However, many of the producers were pleased with yields which were higher and the quality better than expected.

The dry spring also had an effect on the county cattlemen. Grass, which should have been tall and lush in June, was short and brown. Cattlemen were forced to intensely manage their pastures and feed resources much earlier in the summer than usual. Weather in the agricultural community governs farming and ranching efforts and the forecast continued to show hot and dry weather.

The fall harvest was also several

weeks earlier than normal. The continuing drought had taken a toll on the crops. In every part of the county, withered and stunted fields were visible. Many corn and milo fields, which were planted in the spring with the intention of harvest for grain, have been chopped for ensilage or swathed to be baled for cattle feed. Many fields were abandoned.

Even on irrigated fields, many producers found that the hot and dry conditions, especially during the pollinating period, affected the ability of the plant to produce grain. This was a challenging harvest.

Nationwide, crops were affected by growing conditions, and yield expectations were low. The commodities futures markets reflected this information, as grain prices, especially soybeans, were at near record highs.

The middle of September is also the usual time for wheat farmers to begin planting winter wheat. The dry conditions had most farmers concerned that the ground didn't contain enough moisture to allow the wheat kernel to sprout after it has been planted.

Dry as conditions were, most farmers were forced to "dust it in," in hope there is enough moisture to sprout the wheat, and, as always, pray for rain.

Memorial building

The grand opening of the restored Robertson-Griffin-Bacon Memorial Building in Bird City was held during the Tri-State Antique Engine and Thresher Show

Bird City Century II Development Foundation purchased the old Security State Bank building in 2011 with assistance from the Bacon Family Foundation.

The building was named in memory of Edgar and Mabel Robertson and Rosemary Griffin who left large bequests to the Foundation in the early 2000s, and E.L. Bacon, who was the owner of the building when it became the Security State Bank. Construction work was done by JM Construction. Board members and local residents assisted in painting, putting the furniture together and other small finishing items.

The purpose of the Robertson-Griffin-Bacon Memorial Building is to serve as a business incubator for newly starting or expanding businesses, by offering an affordable rental rate to assist the occupants in the early 'growing years' of the business.

The Fort Hays State University Kansas Small Business Development Center Outreach Office was the first occupant. Bird City Historical Association moved into the northeast office.

The center offices in the main building are occupied by Active Balance Chiropractic and Acupuncture Clinic.

Roxie Neitzel of St. Francis with Neitzel Insurance Service, has also expanded her business and moving into the north building.

Prairie Land Electric

Prairie Land Electric Co-op moved into it's new facility east of St. Francis on Tuesday, Dec. 11. Their new office, shop, warehouse and storage lot area have been under construction since early summer.

"All of the items we need for normal day-to-day operations have been relocated here from Bird City, said Dave Hickert, longtime Prairie Land employee. "There is a lot of inventory and other non-essential items we will move throughout the year, as time and labor permit."

Christmas in a barn—



CHRISTMAS IN A BARN was held at the Steve and Jan Busse farm south of Bird City. The manger setting made the live Nativity scene very impressive. Photo by Jan Busse

Obituary

Douglas Neil Stinehagen

July 29, 1933 - Nov. 6, 2012

Douglas Neil Stinehagen, 79, died Tuesday Nov. 6, 2012, at his home in Colorado Springs. He was born July 29, 1933, in Big Springs, Neb., to Lewis Ernest and Sybil Rebecca (Duffey) Stinehagen. The family lived in Big Springs, Broken Bow and Ogallala, Neb., before moving to Cheyenne County, Kan. in May 1942.

Doug began his schooling in Ogallala and continued it in Cheyenne County West 10 Clough Valley, St. Francis grade school, graduated from St. Francis Community High School in May of 1951. During these years Doug was active in FFA where he took great pride in his cattle judging skills taught to him by his father and grandfather, Henry Stinehagen.

After graduating from high school, Doug worked on the family farm with his father until entering Colorado A&M in Ft. Collins, Colo. He graduated with a degree in Vo Agriculture in June 1956.

During summer breaks, Doug's employment included working in the oil fields of Wyoming as well as in the logging industry in California. After graduation, Doug enlisted in the Army and was stationed in Ft. Bliss, Texas, during his service years.

Doug loved the rodeo and during his free time he and his friends could always be found entering bronc busting or bull riding contests. He always carried around a saddle so when money was tight he and his friends would walk around like stove up cowboys and would get into the rodeo free.

His mother was horrified that he did such a thing, but was more so when she found out years late that his front teeth were knocked out while riding a bull; decidedly not the story he had told before. He has a great sense of humor not always appreciated by his mother.

After being discharged from the Army, Doug moved to Montana where one of his good friends Gene Taylor lived. There he worked on ranches, did substitute teaching, sold insurance and was a forest fire fighter. At some point during this time, Doug met a cute little red head by the name of Sharon Tarr. They were married at Sherry's grandparents ranch in Hamilton, Mont., on April 11, 1963.

Eventually, Doug and Sherry moved to Walnut Creek, Calif.,

where Doug worked as an insurance adjuster. During this time their children, Steven Michael and Cynthia LeAnn, were born.

In 1967, the family moved to Colorado Springs where he continued working as an insurance adjuster and bought a book store. Several years later Doug began working in the concrete business as a contractor, eventually owning his own company, called Advanced Concrete. Doug owned his own business until he retired. He continued to be active in many pursuits until his death. He loved hunting, fishing, skiing, photography, reading and politics.

Doug was preceded in death by his parents, Lewis and Sybil, his step father, Maxon Brown, brother-

in-law, Delbert Powell, sister Carol Lou and husband, Donald Crumly.

Surviving are his son Steven (Pia) and daughter Cynthia (Jay) Sparr of Billings, Mont. Grandchildren: Stephanie and Christian of Rammelsbach, Germany, Jorand Julia Sparr, sister Rosemary Powell of Bird City, nieces: Kathy Thibedeau of Norton, Jan (Sam) Washburn, Lewisville, Texas, nephews Mark Crumly, Gray, Tenn., Mike Crumly and Dennis Kircher, Tucson, Ariz., grand niece, Corina Olliff (Verland) and family, Norton and grand nephews, Josh and Jacob Washburn of Lewisville, as well as a host of friends. He will be missed by all who knew him.

A private burial will be scheduled at a future date in St. Francis.

The Saint Francis Herald and Bird City Times

Will be CLOSED Mon., Dec. 31 and Tues. Jan. 1



Ad and Copy Deadline is Wed., Jan. 2 at 5 p.m.

The papers will be delivered on Dec. 28.

The staff at the St. Francis Herald and Bird City Times wishes everyone a Happy New Year!

NEW YEAR'S EVE DANCE

**Bird City American Legion Hall
Monday, December 31
8:30 pm - 1:00 am**

BYOB

(All ages welcome; however, no under age drinking allowed)

MC Entertainment (Andrew Melia) will be our evening DJ
A wide variety of music will be played ...
Country, Soft-Rock, Hip-Hop, Latin



Sponsored by Bird City Century II Development Foundation
Thank you to the community for your patience as the American Legion Hall has been undergoing renovations!
Our BEST WISHES to everyone for 2013!!!

Honor Roll

Martin Estrada, Bird City; Stan Dorsch, Bird City; Velma Kruse, Bird City; Paul Roesner, Bird City; Lila Gotchall, Goodland; Bill Martinez, Bird City; Ervin Peters, Bird City; Ada Connett, St. Francis; Larry Willis, Bird City; Lonnie Willis, Bird City; Josh Sowers, Bird City; Rod Young, St. Francis.



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The Saint Francis Herald Bird City Times

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