

## “Azure Skies”



The 6th Grade Instrumental Music Recital was held Wednesday, April 20 in the band room at Eisenhower Elementary. There were eight selections played by the musicians for the enjoyment of the audience. Pictured are Miah Melvin, Bells; Caitlyn Cox, Alto Sax and Baylee Miller, Clarinet.

-Telegram photo by Harriett Gill

# Girl Scouts say thanks!

Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland would like to thank the community for another successful Cookie Sale. Girl Scouts across 80 Kansas counties sold nearly 1.5 million boxes, a 7.6 percent increase over last year. The 2011 Cookie Sale took place Jan. 22 through March 13.

There were 1,496,500 total boxes sold, up 7.6 percent from 2010; 9,165 total Girl Scouts participated.

There were 15,328 boxes collected for the Cookie Share Program, up 48 percent from last year. These cookies will be distributed to the Kansas Food Bank, Catholic Charities, McConnell Air Force Base, the Kansas National Guard and local food pantries. (Pickup times will be scheduled next week; watch for more information about media opportunities)

“When you pull a box of Thin Mints out of your freezer this summer (if you have any left) think about all of the Girl Scouts who are enjoying wonderful sum-

mer camp experiences all because of you,” said Shelly Chenoweth, Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland CEO. “Girls are learning new skills, developing confidence and becoming leaders thanks to your support.”

Eight varieties of Girl Scout Cookies were available for \$3.50 per box (Thin Mints, Shortbread, Peanut Butter Patties, Peanut Butter Sandwiches, Lemonades, Caramel deLites, Thanks-A-Lot and Shout Outs). Proceeds from the cookie sale are used to benefit local girls, helping them pay for summer camp experiences, purchase uniforms and much more. The sale also funds programs and services throughout the year and ensures that Girl Scouting will be available in the future.

For more than 90 year’s the Girl Scout Cookie Program has helped girls foster a sense of personal and collective empowerment by promoting skills they will use throughout their lives. Through this annual activity, girls ages 5 to 17 learn how to set goals, develop

action plans, work as a team and cultivate a sense of business ethics and most of all, have fun!

New this year were the Shout Outs, caramelized shortbread cookies with inspirational phrases such as Believe, Create and Lead. Another change customers may have noticed was the packaging for Thanks-A-Lot cookies. By eliminating the carton, more than 150 tons of paperboard were kept out of the waste stream enough to fill 14 garbage trucks!

Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland serves nearly 15,000 girls and adults in 80 Kansas counties through its operational headquarters in Wichita, and regional offices.

Founded in 1912, Girl Scouts is the leading authority on girls’ healthy development and is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls.

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

## Local bank helps school district

Officials from Almena State Bank believe supporting the local school district helps both entities. That’s why Almena State Bank has committed several thousand dollars the past few years to Northern Valley High School and Northern Valley USD 212.

“It is vital for our organization to be involved financially with support for our school district,” said Glenn Brands, Almena State Bank assistant vice president and Insurance Agency manager. “Budget cuts for schools do not allow them to upgrade certain areas of their property without financial support from local businesses. Without a school district, our community would deteriorate.”

The following are some items that the Almena State Bank has donated to the school district over the past several years.

- \* Donated to and arranged for the purchase of a new football scoreboard.

- \* Purchased a new snow blower for the school.

- \* Purchased a new lawn mower

for the school.

- \* Purchased a new safety mat for the gymnasium.

- \* Donated to and arranged for the erection of flashing school zone beacons at the grade school.

- \* Donated several pallets of bottled water to the service club to sell at concessions.

- \* Provided for the use of a portable grill to use for special events.

- \* Provided sacks to the service club for popcorn.

Brands said he receives suggestions for projects and takes ideas about what type of equipment might be needed by the district.

“Our bank is very generous and very rarely is a reasonable request for sponsorship ever denied,” he said.

Brands said Superintendent George Griffith and school personnel appreciate the financial support.

“They are very thankful for the help. The custodians thank us quite often after a large snow

storm since we donated a snow blower,” he said.

Employees are also actively involved in their own community service.

“Most of the employees of the bank are involved in some type of civic activity in our community,” he said.

The Almena State Bank also assists in other community projects. Almena is constructing a new \$553,000 community building/library and the bank has made a substantial contribution to that project.

“We sponsor Little League teams by purchasing shirts for them,” he said. “We make contributions to the Norton County Fair and make frequent livestock purchases at the County Fair Livestock auction.”

To nominate a business, volunteer, civic organization or booster club visit <http://nex-techwireless.com> and click on the “Booster of the Week” banner.

## Adopt-A-Highway litter program

It’s unsightly and it’s unsafe. Litter along the highways throughout the state has a negative impact on everyone, both residents and visitors to Kansas.

Participating in the Kansas Department of Transportation’s (KDOT) Adopt-A-Highway program can have a positive impact on helping to keep the highways clean.

With nearly 10,000 miles of highways in Kansas, new groups can always join.

Some of the urban stretches of roadway are open to adopt, and numerous sections in the rural areas are available as well.

Groups are asked to sign a two-

year agreement with the program, and several groups have been with the program since it started in Kansas in 1990. Other groups that have previously participated in the program are now rejoining and getting involved in the program again.

Groups clean their sections of roadway three times a year at their convenience. Most choose to schedule a clean-up time in the spring, summer and fall.

Adopt-A-Highway groups are participating in the annual Clean Up Kansas Campaign which is taking place during April.

All Adopt-A-Highway groups are encouraged but not required to

participate in the statewide event. Motorists are asked to use extra caution as people with bright orange vests will be working next to the highways.

Any non-profit group that does not discriminate upon the basis of race, religion or sex can adopt a section of roadway.

Youth groups with members at least 11 years old are also eligible.

KDOT provides each group safety training, trash bags, orange vests and signs for their adopted stretch of highway.

For more information, contact the KDOT office in Norton at 785-877-3315. Adopt

## Renewable energy eligible for loans

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack invited agricultural producers and rural small businesses to apply for loans and grants to implement renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements.

“Biofuels and other renewable energy sources present an enormous economic opportunity for rural America and the rest of the nation,” Vilsack said. “President Obama and I recognize that we need to win the future by implementing a long-term strategy to meet our country’s current and long-term energy needs. The funding I am announcing today will help make America’s farmers, ranchers and rural businesses more energy efficient.”

USDA is providing funding for up to \$61 million in guaranteed loans and \$42 million in grants through the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). Funds are available to help agricultural producers and rural small businesses develop renewable energy systems, make energy efficiency improvements and conduct studies to determine the feasibility of renewable energy systems.

Last week the USDA issued a rule to clarify that the definition of renewable energy systems in REAP includes flexible fuel pumps, sometimes referred to as

“blender pumps.” This clarification is intended to provide fuel station owners with incentives to install flexible fuel pumps that will offer Americans more renewable energy options. The Obama administration has set a goal of installing 10,000 flexible fuel pumps nationwide within 5 years.

The rule also makes the following clarifications:

Grants are available for audits of energy improvements and studies to determine the feasibility of renewable energy systems; and

Agricultural producers in non-rural areas are eligible for REAP assistance. Small businesses must still be located in rural areas. This clarification makes REAP eligibility requirements consistent with those of other USDA energy programs.

Since Rural Development’s renewable energy and energy efficiency programs were launched in 2003, they have played a key role in helping more than 6,000 local businesses create jobs and make energy efficiency improvements. Under REAP, local businesses receive assistance to deploy wind, solar and other forms of renewable energy. For example, Pagel Ponderosa and partner business Dairy Dreams in Kewaunee County, Wis., used

REAP funds to help purchase and install anaerobic digesters. Both businesses use the energy generated from their digesters to run their operations and sell excess power back to the grid. The two digesters have become so successful that along with two wind farms operating in the county they are generating enough electricity to support all of the county’s 8,900 households.

The deadlines for submitting completed REAP applications are June 15 and June 30, depending on the type of project to be funded. For information on how to apply for assistance, contact your local USDA Rural Development office or see page 20943 of the April 14 Federal Register, <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2011/pdf/2011-8456.pdf>.

USDA, through its Rural Development mission area, administers and manages housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs through a national network of state and local offices. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America. Rural Development has an existing portfolio of nearly \$149 billion in loans and loan guarantees.

e-mail your club and social news  
to  
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Healthcare you can believe in.

## Good Samaritan Ambulance Services Community Appreciation Open House



Saturday, April 30  
2 to 4 p.m.  
902 E. B, McCook

The public is invited to an open house to thank you for eight years of support!

- tour our ambulance
- tour our AirCare helicopter\*
- free blood pressure checks
- refreshments
- door prizes

Good Samaritan Emergency Services transports patients between hospitals, often when a patient needs a higher level of care. Each year, our two ambulances in McCook travel nearly 100,000 miles across three states—from Omaha to Denver to Kansas City—and many points in-between. Our staff provide the region with 24/7 long distance ambulance transportation with advanced life support.

\* Weather and schedule permitting.

Getting Married? Send in your news  
and pictures.

Harriett at [hgill@nwkansas.com](mailto:hgill@nwkansas.com)

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