

If there is a disaster...

Last Wednesday, a mock "point of dispensing" drill was held to test the county's effectiveness in responding to a biological attack. The drill was a 2-hour, real-time drill administered by the Cheyenne County Health Department in cooperation with the Cheyenne County Emergency Preparedness coordinator, emergency medical service personnel, courthouse employees and other volunteers.

There are two designated point of dispensing sites in the county — the St. Francis Grade School and the Cheylin High School in Bird City. The mock drill was under the direction of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's Center for Public Health Preparedness.

"The setting for our point of dispensing drill should serve as a significant reminder of the importance of emergency preparedness," said Kari Gilliland, public information office personnel. "Biological attacks can happen at any time as well as close to home just as the one in Greensburg."

The patients used in the mock drill were Mr. Morrow's third-hour advanced composition class of seniors. These "patients" simulate the ill effects of a biological attack, and were sent through the drill process as they would be during the aftermath of an actual incident.

The first stage for all patients is triage — during which they will be evaluated purely on superficial conditions. For instance, "this patient appears to be ill," Mrs. Gilliland said as she reports an example.

Patients moved onto registration, where they were asked basic questions about their condition. From that group, some went on to medical evaluation, then medication was dispensed as deemed necessary.

One of the aims of the exercise was to process the 23 patients in an effective and timely manner, Mrs. Gilliland said.

The results of the drill was evaluated for its effectiveness in providing medication and basic information for the threatened community as well as for its ability to direct asymptomatic victims away from hospitals, in hopes of reserving these critical facilities for the severely ill.

For the case of the senior class acting as victims, they were not actually being given tetanus vaccine through the drill, but were given candies to represent tetanus. They were also given information regarding tetanus developed by the Center for Disease Control.

This drill was only a test and we hope our drills do not have to be activated for actual biological attacks, Mrs. Gilliland said.



PRETENDING TO BE BLIND was Cara Hunt. She was guided by Teryn Richard (behind Cara) and helped by Terry Miller. Others to the left were Andrea Holzwarth, far left, and Taylor Kennedy. Students from David Morrow's advanced composition class participated in the 'point of dispensing' drill.



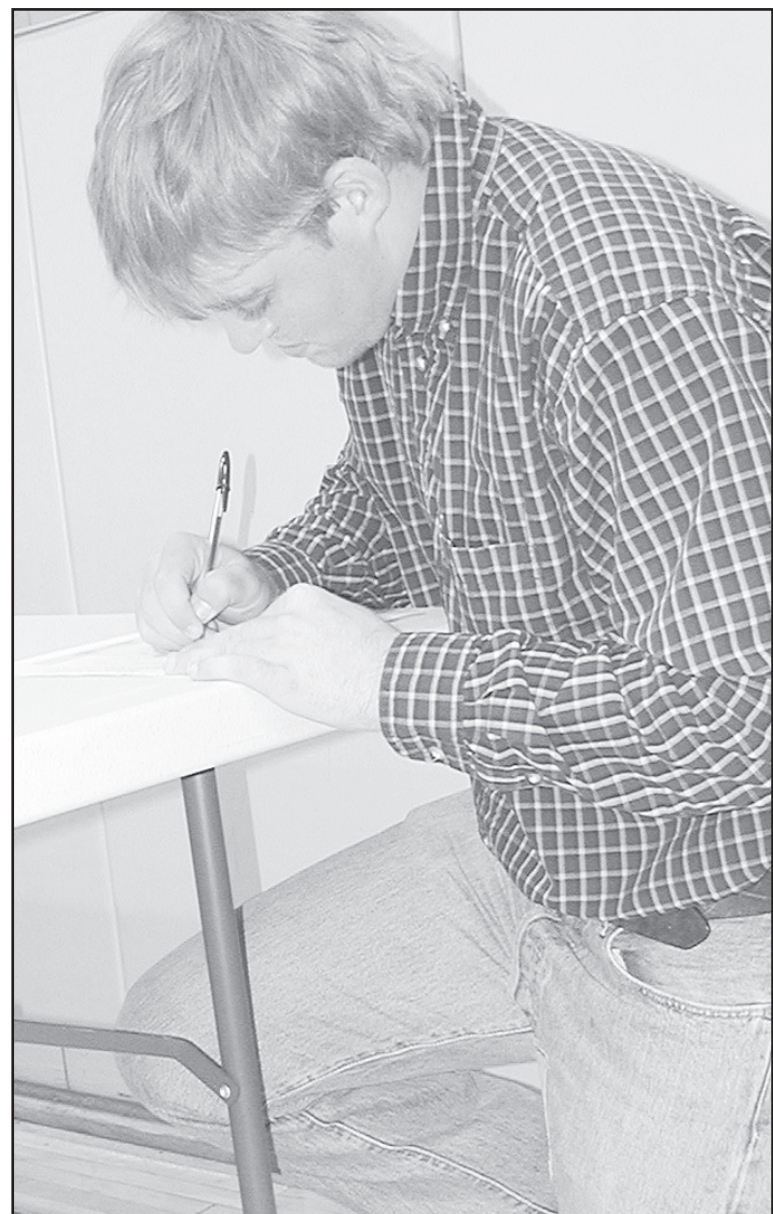
MILA BANDEL, county health nurse, talks with Pam Stuczynski, Rawlins County Health Nurse.



CHECKING IN — Shawn Warren, left, and CJ. Douthit talk with Kari Gilliland, right, and Terry Miller, center.



SCREENING INTERVIEWS was Dolores Jenik, left. Students talking to her are Sarah Guthmiller, center, and CJ Douthit.



FILLING OUT FORMS was Talon Jones.

Herald staff photos by Karen Krien



WHEELCHAIR BOUND was Jesse Pacheco who was aided by Mila Bandel. Checking him out were Eileene Nolan, center, and Annette Erskin.