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**Bird City Times**  
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# Fires fought incountry

Firemen from Bird City and St. Francis have been busy putting out fires this past week.

St. Francis firemen were called out four different times to put out two fires — each starting up again after a lapse of time.

George Harper, St. Francis fire chief, said the firemen started fighting the first fire at 1 a.m. on Thursday about 12 miles southwest of St. Francis on the old Lippelman place. The Hale Fire Department was called to help.

The second fire was just about 2-miles west. Acres of pasture, stubble, CRP and trees were destroyed.

In all, firemen battled flames for 22 hours during Thursday and Friday.

Mr. Harper said the fires were started by lightning strikes.

"It rained .30 in town but there was no rain southwest of town," he said. "It is so dry."

On Monday, Bird City firemen were called to put out a fire 5 miles south of U.S. 36 on Road 31, just west of the Dan Busse farm.



BIRD CITY FIREMEN fought a stubble field fire southeast of Bird City most of the afternoon on Monday.  
Herald staff photo by Casey McCormick

## TRACTOR

Continued from Page 1

Wheeler and hadn't been missed until his son went to get something out of the shed March 16. Goodale said the tractors were evidently taken before the snows in December because there were no tracks on the ground, but he hadn't been out to check them over the winter.

In Wallace County, the men were charged with theft of a 1973 International 1066 tractor owned by Oriette Ritter of Sharon Springs. Stephens said in his plea he stole the tractor March 10.

Callicrate appeared before Judge John Cahoj Tuesday in the Sherman County District Court and waived his right to a preliminary hearing. His arraignment is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 10. In the meantime, his attorney, Michael Day, and Sherman County Attorney Bonnie Selby are trying to work out a plea agreement.

"I'm not terribly concerned," Selby said. "Our cases are solid."

Selby said the cases caught law enforcement off guard, though.

"Usually, we are looking for a needle in a haystack," she said, "but this time it was a John Deere."

The tractors were sold as scrap for \$1,000 each, said Wallace County Sheriff Larry Townsend.

Stephens appeared in Wallace County District Court on Monday, April 30, to face one count of felony theft, a level 9 nonperson felony. The sentence in such a case could be up to 17 months in jail and a fine not to exceed \$100,000 under state law.

"I'm happy we were able to conclude this," Townsend said in the May 3 edition of *The Western Times* of Sharon Springs. "Further investigation will bring one more arrest in this case. I hope that this sends a message out: Don't steal in Wallace County... because I'll turn the hounds loose!"

Stephens and Callicrate were charged in the Sherman County District Court with conspiracy to commit felony theft of the 1976 Deere owned by Brent Cook. Court documents say that sometime between Nov. 1 and March 29, they agreed to use a truck and trailer belonging to Callicrate Feed Yard to take the tractor to Denver, where it also was sold as scrap to Western Metals.

Cook's tractor had been taken to the college for repairs in the diesel technology department. A fax from Dan and Rita Stephens to Scott

Showalter of Goodland, John Stephens' court-appointed attorney, in the Sherman County Court file contains a copy of a bill from the department to Cook for repairs on the tractor.

The bill for \$1,020 is dated April 23, 14 days after Stephens and Callicrate were arrested, and lists repairs done.

A document in the fax lists the total value of the tractor as \$18,510, including \$12,500 for the tractor, \$4,000 for loader brackets, \$850 for an extra valve he had mounted on the tractor, \$150 for a two-way radio and \$1,020 for the repairs performed at the college.

Stephens' first appearance in Sherman County was Thursday, May 3, Selby said. He pleaded guilty Friday, May 18, and was sentenced Monday, June 4.

Stephens was free on \$50,000 bond in Wallace County, court

documents said. If the Cheyenne and Wallace cases were resolved first, his release on recognizance in Sherman County would change to release supervised by Court Services Officer Deborah Farland.

In a plea bargain between Wallace County Attorney Charles Mosier and Stephens' court-appointed attorney, Stephens agreed to plead guilty to the theft charge.

In return, Mosier agreed not to oppose probation or release prior to sentencing. The county attorney also agreed to turn \$863 taken from Stephens' bank account over to the court services officer to help pay restitution in Cheyenne and Sherman counties.

Stephens agreed to cooperate and testify against others involved in similar thefts in all three counties.

Judge Glenn E. Schiffner reminded Stephens that the court is not bound by plea agreements and he

could still impose the maximum fines and penalties. Schiffner asked Stephens if he did what he was accused of.

"On March 10th, I stole a tractor in Wallace County," he said, describing the 1973 International.

Judge Schiffner accepted Stephens' guilty plea and ordered a presentence investigation, which takes about 60 days to complete. Schiffner set sentencing for 1:30 p.m. Thursday, June 7.

As part of the plea agreement Stephens must live with his parents and find a job so he can pay his victims. Sherman County requires that Stephens wear an ankle bracelet as part of his agreement here, and everyone agreed that he would be taken to Sherman County until his case is resolved. Parties also agreed on restitution in the amount of \$6,500, which will be paid to Ritter

## TRACTOR

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is just naming a few of the prizes but when the price tag is totalled, there are between \$5,000 and \$7,000 in merchandise.

When the fair comes, kids and adults can accumulate tokens at the game booths and purchase a prize with tokens.

There is also the Duck Pond which offers a small toy with every duck the child catches. Most games cost 25 cents.

The Authority not only painted booths and rides but also covered seats on the Ferris wheel. Every ride needs to be checked to make sure it is running correctly and is safe. Games need to be set up to see if they still work and, if there is a new game, all the pieces need to be gathered and assembled.

The Authority members are all

volunteers. Some have been on at least 20 years. They said they enjoy being on the Amusement Authority but would like some younger help.

Anyone wanting to be a part of the carnival, be a part of the planning and the excitement of helping with the fair should call Bill Ehrman 332-2748, or Greg and Susie Walz 332-2968 or 332-3486.

**\$1,000**

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They had some other items and also had special treats at the grocery store.

As Mrs. Ritchey shopped, she thanked the businesses for participating in the Shopping Spree.

"It was hot and we were happy that the people turned out for the Christmas In July Shopping Spree," Mr. McCormick said. "It will only be a few months before the Christmas On Us drawing will be held."

Other businesses participating in the Shopping Spree were Ross Manufacturing, Sainty Stitches, Schultz's, United Methodist Thrift Store and *The Saint Francis Herald*.

## FAIR

Continued from Page 1 in the grandstand arena.

Other 4-H, FFA and open class events and times are:

- 10:10 a.m. - Welding, woodworking judging, fair building.
- 11:30 a.m. - Electric, small engines, entomology, forestry and geology, fair building.
- 5-6 p.m. - Sheep and goat weigh-in, livestock barn.
- 5-7 p.m. - Beef weigh-in, livestock barn.
- 6-7 p.m. Swine weigh-in, livestock barn.
- 6 p.m. - Kids Rodeo entries start.
- 6:30 p.m. - Kids Rodeo begins.
- 7:30 p.m. - Entries begin for Ranch Rodeo.
- 7:45 p.m. - Catch-It-Pig contest.
- 8 p.m. - Ranch Rodeo
- 7-11 p.m. - Home-owned carnival



rides and games. Inserted in this issue of *The Saint Francis Herald* and *Bird City Times* is the Pre-Fair Special Section. The fair board has sponsored a full page of times and events; and First National Bank and Farm Credit have sponsored a page of special happenings during the fair. Be sure to check out the special section, the stories about 4-H'ers and events happening during the fair.

### SENIOR CITIZEN ALERT Don't Get Scammed



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