

Courthouse step bids let

By Karen Krien
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The front steps leading up to the Cheyenne County Courthouse have been closed since before the end of the year because they had been deemed unsafe. At the Friday meeting, the commissioners met with a representative who will oversee the rebuilding of the steps.

Following the commissioners closing the steps to the south entrance of the courthouse, Greg Kite, former resident and president of the Sedgwick Historical Society, had contacted the commissioners telling them that the courthouse could be eligible for a grant to replace the steps to the original condition.

Mr. Kite, who is also a lawyer, wrote and submitted the grant to the Kansas Historical Society. Within weeks, the commissioners were informed that they had been awarded the grant which would pay for the majority of the costs and the county would provide what it would have cost to rebuild the steps with concrete or around \$20,000.

Eric Johnson with Campbell and Johnson, an engineering company out of Concordia, was hired to oversee the steps job. Mr. Johnson told the commissioners that the county was fortunate to have the original blue prints and, with those drawings, the steps will be brought back to their original state.

After going through some of the construction process, the commissioners approved the plans and the notice asking for bids is published in *The Saint Francis Herald* and *Bird City Times*.

Mr. Johnson recommended hiring a main contractor. The bid deadline will be at 1 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 16. He noted that, just because a bid is the lowest, the bidder may not qualify for the job and it will not be awarded to that person. He also said that the contractor will be required to be bonded.

If the weather holds, the concrete base may be poured before the high temperatures drop below 40 degrees. Then the stone will be laid in the spring.

HEARING

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not putting money into the department's equipment reserve fund. Mr. Beikman said the commissioners are going to apply for a Community Development Building grant for an ambulance. Mrs. Bowers questioned what they would do if they didn't get the grant. She was told that very seldom is a request for an ambulance or fire truck turned down, especially if 25 percent of the money is put toward the cost.

She also asked about having money budgeted toward training. The commissioners said there has never been money put toward training; that it was taken out of the general fund if needed.

The budget hearing was closed with it standing as it was published in the Aug. 23 issue of *The Saint Francis Herald* and *Bird City Times*.

Weeds and prairie dogs

Dan Schlittenhardt, noxious weed and prairie dog control manager, talked about prairie dog control again as well as bind-weed control. He said there is a farmer in the northern part of the county who hadn't controlled the weed. The Farm Service Agency had terminated the farmer's contract because he was doing nothing about controlling the weed and now he could have between 150 and 160 acres to spray.

The time to start baiting prairie dog with Rozal is October. They talked about private businesses who were baiting the dogs. They are not exactly sure what the cost is but thought it was approximately \$35 per acre which would guarantee getting rid of 75 to 90 percent of the dogs; for \$40, there would be a 99-percent guarantee. However, they were not sure about these figures

and were not able to contact the person who they thought was doing the baiting.

The commissioners discussed who was responsible for paying for the baiting. Unless there is a prior agreement, the landowner is responsible. There is a prairie dog problem in the county and the commissioners agreed that they would continue work on this problem.

Mr. Schlittenhardt was given permission to attend a meeting where he could be recertified.

In other business

In other business:

- Justin Barrett, county attorney, was asked about the county joining the "quad county task force." Mr. Barrett said he didn't feel that this force always handles cases the way the county wants to handle cases. He said he would find out more about it. Others involved in the task force are Thomas, Sherman, Wallace and Rawlins counties. Mr. Beikman said that if the commissioners are really interested in belonging to the force, they need to talk to other county commissioners and see how and if it would benefit the county.

- Gary Rogers, emergency manager, said he was in the process of applying for a grant that the county may or may not need. There will be no out-of-pocket costs.

There will be an exercise on a stand-alone plan for Bonny Reservoir. They will be exercising communication operations as if there is a flood. St. Francis is the first in line for a natural disaster if this would happen. He said the Bureau of Reclamation owns the dam and its offices are in Nebraska.

- The commissioners signed the wage agreement for new deputy, John Lanz.

- Susan Roelfs, county health nurse, said the state has re-extended the time and there will be funding for the pandemic flu immunization until November.

- The commissioners wrote off in bills that will not be collected.

- Pastor David Butler, Cheyenne County Development Corporation director, talked about the county incentive plan and both the director and the commissioners felt the plan needed to be redone.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the commissioners has been set for 8 a.m. on Sept. 14 at the courthouse.

911

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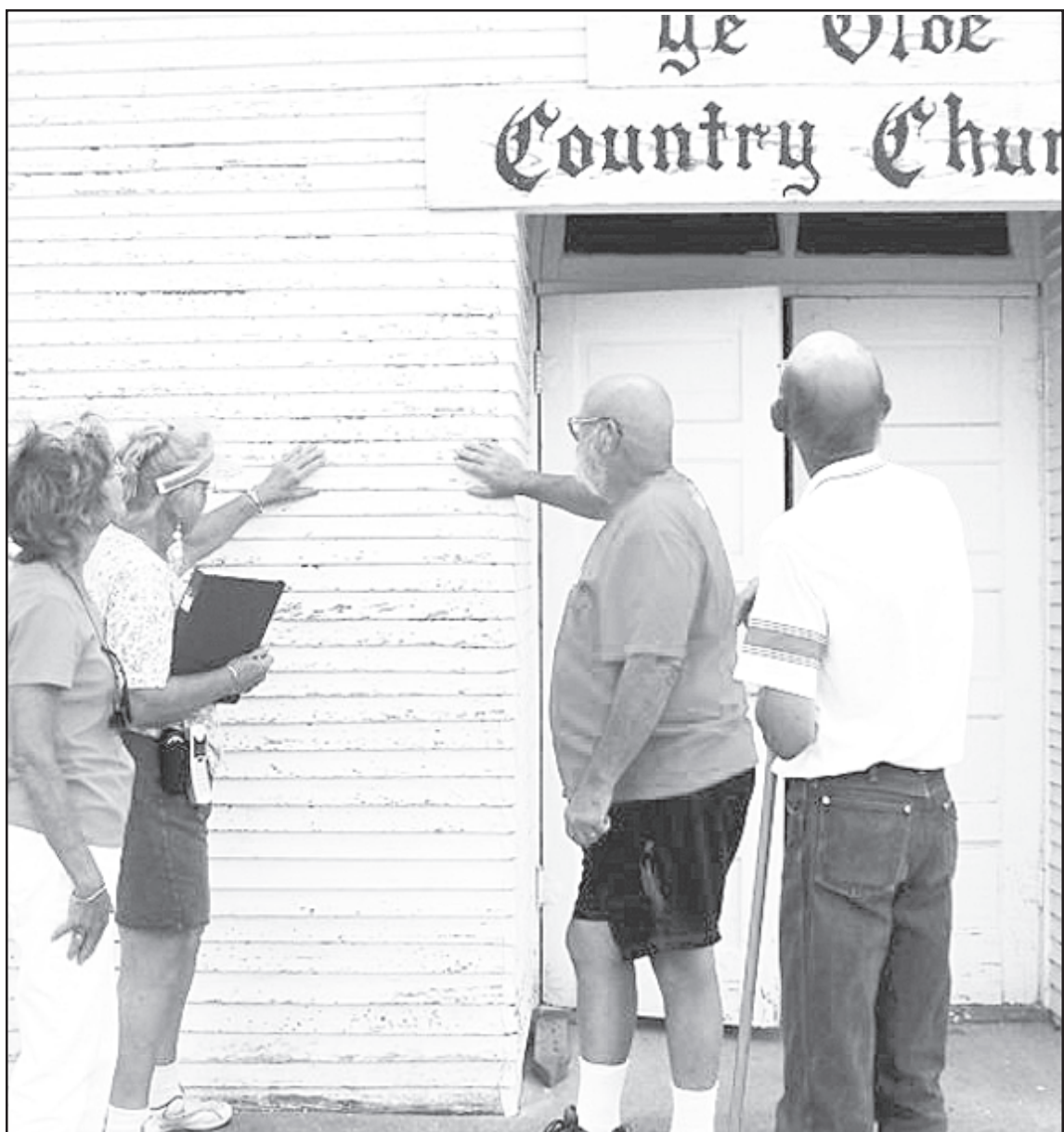
They talked about the 911 system being an entity, separate from the commissioners. Mr. Beikman said that in order for that to happen, it needs to have its own board with part of the members being law enforcement, firemen and emergency medical service personnel. The board will need to be organized by Jan. 1.

They discussed the 911 dispatchers, how they would be trained and how many will be employed. They said there is a two-week training in Salina which Carol Gamblin, who will head the 911 department, said was excellent training for those who have never been a dispatcher. She said Steve Nolan and Jim Rarick, who have indicated they are going to move with the new system, have already experienced some of the cases they will run into but still suggested they needed additional training.

Four to five full-time employees were recommended with two part-time employees. Mike Day, city council attorney, said J.R. Landenberger, city manager, also had training in this field and would be willing to help if and when needed.

"I encourage you to use him if needed," he said. "This is important for all of the county and he (Mr. Landenberger) may be able to point out some things needed."

Commissioners present were Mr. Beikman, Ernie Ketzner and Ray Lee; city council members were Natalie Knodel, Mrs. Lampe, Mr. Schultz and Dale Weeks. Mrs. Gamblin and Craig Van Allen, acting sheriff, were also there.



INSPECTING THE CHURCH — Ye Olde Country Church is in need of paint and other repairs. Historical Society Committee members (l to r) Diane Krebs, Helene Landenberger, Chuck Krebs and Stan Carman try to decide what recommendations they need to make to the board.

Herald photo by Janet Carman

Historical church in need of paint and other repairs

The white frame church, located next to the Cheyenne County Museum on U.S. 36, has made two journeys in its life.

The old church started life in the minds of German settlers northwest of Wano who organized a Lutheran congregation in 1887. In 1914, this congregation, known as the First German Evangelical Lutheran Immanuel Church, built the church 12 miles north and 5 miles west of St. Francis.

In the late 1880s, a group of settlers, who also would play a part in the history of the old church, began to worship together in the South Fork area of Cheyenne County. In 1929, this congregation became part of the Friends Church.

Changing times brought about the merger of Immanuel and another congregation, Zion Lutheran, in 1945. The growing Friends Church, needing a building at this time, bought the Immanuel Lutheran building. The old church took its first journey in 1951 to the South Fork community. As time passed, changes in population affected this area, causing services to end at the South Fork Friends Church in 1986.

In 1988, the building made its second journey. Renamed Ye Olde Country Church, it now stands on the highway as a re-

minder of the county's past.

If Ye Olde Country Church could talk, these are the words it might utter, "My paint is peeling; the plaster on my walls is chipped and falling; the windows, which let in my light, have cracks in glass and wood; cold air seeps in, causing my guests to shiver in winter and my once beautiful wooden entry doors are scarred with age. Here I sit on Highway 36 for all to see my slow deterioration."

Members of the Historical Society are aware of the deterioration and are taking the first steps to rehabilitate the county's sentimental symbol of the past.

On Saturday, Aug. 18, a study group met to brainstorm options. Those taking part in the session were Elton and Ella Mae Keller, Helene Landenberger, Chuck and Diane Kribs, George and Deb Harper and Stan and Janet Carman.

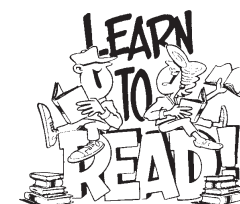
Several ideas resulted from this meeting. Because the church is important to the community, the possibility of historic status for the church will be investigated. This would open grant opportunities.

Putting plastic on windows to protect the interior is critical at this time. Keeping heat in the building during winter months would prevent plaster cracking. It

was decided to run heat for one month during cold weather to see how much it would cost. Other immediate needs are being determined at this time.

Community input on the future of Ye Olde Country Church is needed.

"Please contact study group members listed above and share your ideas about why preserving the old church is important to you and what should be done to preserve it," Mrs. Carman said. "You may also write down your ideas and leave them at *The Herald* office or at the Museum. (Open Tuesday - Friday from 1 to 4).



CHURCH

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there was an intentional effort to say "thank you" to those responders, as we had seen the tremendous dedication and selflessness that goes with those jobs," said Rev. Truman, Methodist Church pastor. "Over the course of time, we sometimes forget that a word of thanks is always needed.

"The church wanted to offer an opportunity to gather as a community and honor our hometown heroes who respond at all hours of the day and night, sometimes without any acknowledgment or appreciation."

Jo Frewen, the church's chair of missions and the wife of a volunteer firefighter agrees.

"I know that when those pagers signal the department, those guys take off. Sometimes they know what they're heading into, sometimes the situation escalates. And they just go."

"The same is true for all our emergency responders and care-givers," said Rev. Truman. "The EMTs, the police and sheriff's departments and the hospital staff are all highly trained professionals and we all benefit from their work and attention in

our community and county. We are fortunate in Cheyenne County to have these men and women serving our needs."

At the same time as the cookout, all residents are invited to take a look at the Kan-Step building that is in progress along U.S. 36. Tremendous strides are taking place on this building that will house emergency vehicles and there is an ongoing need for volunteer labor to help with construction.

"Please join with the community in honoring those professionals who serve all," Rev. Truman said.

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