

Coordinator reports on plan

By Karen Krien

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David Butler, Cheyenne County Development Corporation coordinator, has announced that the Cheyenne County Commissioners recently approved the Cheyenne County Strategic Plan. The Development board, along with Joan Gienger, recently updated the plan and applied to become a part of a multi-county Enterprise Zone designation which will provide business incentives. The strategic plan is an important part of Cheyenne County receiving designation as an Enterprise Zone.

Mr. Butler noted that, as the board went through the process of revising the original strategic plan, members of the board dialogued with various entities in the county. They found their goals and plans and then structured the plan to state those goals so it is a picture of what is happening within the county.

"By getting input from those already working toward the betterment of Cheyenne County," said Kim Zwegardt, president of the board. "The plan can truly reflect all of the good things going on, the future goals of the organizations that all work to revitalize the population, lifestyle and economy of county. This is a very workable plan and we are deeply grateful for the input and cooperation we received from everyone involved, but we must particularly thank Joan Gienger. She is a genius when it comes to innovative ways to concisely state our plans and goals into a very workable format. She just volunteered her time and expertise to us as a board."

The plan is designed around meeting four objectives:

1) Mobilize local leaders by building a skilled leaders with a capacity to improve and sustain communities.

2) Energize entrepreneurs to build local businesses and create jobs.

3) Engage and attract young people to become future leaders to revitalize population and lifestyle.

4) Capture wealth transfer by acting now.

"We need to capture a portion of the wealth that will transfer between generations and hold these assets as community endowed funds," Pastor Butler said.

Mrs. Zwegardt noted that many people love Cheyenne County and want to be able to leave a legacy, but that takes planning and that is why this is an objective.

Under each of the objectives are goals to meet the objectives. Many of the goals are on-going, but others have dates set and groups in place to meet the objective.

As goals are met, others will be placed on the "front burner" for implementation.

"The strategic plan is like a map that not only tells you where you are now, but guides you to where you want to go," Mrs. Zwegardt said.

First objective

Under the first objective, there are 10 goals specified. One of the first is a county-wide training program, through the Community Builders with Tom Keller as the contact person. Another goal is to form a grant-writing group. The Development Corporation has the computer software in place so that grant writers have access to information.

"That is an exciting development because previously anyone wanting to use this software had to travel to Colby," Mrs. Zwegardt said.

Building local businesses/create jobs

Twenty ways are listed in the plan to build local businesses and create jobs with the number one objective being to coordinate wind energy development groups and landowners.

"Wind energy development was one of the major interests coming out of the county-wide forum held at the St. Francis Community High School, so it was included as part of the strategic plan," Mrs. Zwegardt said.

This goes hand-in-hand with exploring the development, promotion and utilization of bioenergy such as wind, solar, geothermal and fuel such as biodiesel and ethanol. A biofuels conference is scheduled for Feb. 14 hosted by the Farm Bureau.

Other goals involve the continued development of new markets for agriculture projects through the High Plains Food Co-op. Jo Hagny, St. Francis, is the contact person for this goal.

The objectives include water conservation, determining where loans are available, highlighting the county's business opportunities as well as retirement and hobby opportunities. The plan emphasizes offering incentives as well as highlighting opportunities for alumni through having a web site page on the future Cheyenne County Development Corporation's website geared toward alumni who want to return to Cheyenne County or invest in the county in some way.

Retaining/attracting young people

Retaining and attracting young people is of primary importance. Goals include continuing to providing quality information systems, after-school programs and maintaining the Colby Community College out-reach courses. Other plans are to promote Cheyenne County's excellent health care, affordable housing, abundant recreational activities (and plans for new ones), plus promoting "coming back home" through the website, newspapers and the alumni

reunion invitation letters.

"We must market Cheyenne County as a great place to live and raise a family," Pastor Butler said.

Elderly

"We want to attract and retain youth because they are the future," said Mrs. Zwegardt. "However, Cheyenne County is home to all ages so we included goals for the elderly under our fourth objective which is 'capture wealth transfer.'"

"Our goal is that Cheyenne County be a vibrant place to live no matter your age."

Included in the plan are goals to help the elderly to live their remaining life in Cheyenne County by creating and maintaining services for them. Suggestions include: developing transportation for those needing it; provide transitional housing and services for assisted and independent living; hold seminars for retirees and those near retirement as well as providing a means for farmers to pass their farm on to the next generation. Toward that goal, Joe Leibbrandt, Cheyenne County Extension agent, plans a "Keeping the Family Farm" seminar in October. Last of all, the plan hopes to encourage and provide a means for the elderly to pass on a portion of their wealth to the county and/or communities during their estate planning

Business Development and Retention

Part of Cheyenne County Development Corporation's mission is to improve business and economic viability in Cheyenne County within existing businesses as well as working to bring new business to the county. The strategic plan addresses the importance of developing a "shop at home" attitude, highlighting businesses that have incentives to shop at home and provide seminars for businesses on how to attract and retain customers, while showing the true cost of shopping elsewhere.

"And with our designation as an Enterprise Zone, we have a tangible way to offer incentives that we don't offer in our Cheyenne County business incentive plan," Mrs. Zwegardt said. "It is a win/win for the people of Cheyenne County who are already working together to build our county and communities. In fact, that is why the vision statement of the Strategic Plan is *Cheyenne County Citizens: Many interests working toward a common goal.*"

Plan is available

The strategic plan is available at the Cheyenne County Clerk's office or at the Cheyenne County Development Corporation office, both in St. Francis. For additional information, contact Mr. Butler at 785-332-3508.



SNOW IS FALLING, the embers glow in the fireplace...just the setting for the mystery play, 'Murder Can Be Habit -Forming.' Play practice started Monday night. Rev. Mother Superior (Beth Maifeld), standing, reassures Sister Mary Agatha (Carol Redding), seated left, that they will help her find her presents. Sister Mary Margaret (Deonn Wiese) is waiting to say her part. The play will be performed on March 15.

Theater in St. Francis

Yankee Doodle will be presented at 7:30 p.m. Monday at the St. Francis Community High School auditorium, sponsored by Western Plains Arts Association. The performance is presented by the Wichita Children's Theatre Professional Touring Company. Admission will be by Western Plains Arts Association season pass, or at the door.

This rendition of Yankee Doodle portrays events from the past through drama, music, dance and mime.

School presentations will take place in Quinter and Brewster on Monday and Winona and Rexford on Tuesday.

This presentation is made possible in part by Kansas Arts Commission, a state agency and National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

Fire chief reports on activities during 2007

The St. Francis firemen had a busy year in 2007. When they weren't spending time at the new St. Francis Emergency Service building, they were putting out fires, helping with accidents and going to training meetings.

George Harper, fire chief, turned in the following statistics for 2007:

Training meetings — there were 12 meetings and the firemen accumulated 316 hours.

Wheat stubble fires — there were four fires and they spent 55 hours extinguishing them.

Grass fires — firemen spent 376 hours putting out 14 fires.

Hay bales — there were three hay bale fires and it took 60 hours to put them out.

Structure fires — there were

five structure fires which took 112 hours to extinguish.

Vehicle fires — firemen extinguished four vehicle fires in 39 hours.

Vehicle accidents — firemen attend vehicle accidents helping law and emergency medical technicians. They attended eight accidents and it took 77 total hours.

Search and rescue — there was only one search and rescue mission but firemen helped for 39 hours.

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Licensed Practical Nurse

Logan County Manor is now accepting applications for a full-time LPN. The successful candidate will possess a strong personal value for customer service and commitment of a team oriented working environment. LCM offers a competitive wage/benefit package. Applications may be picked up at Logan County Hospital, Logan County manor or obtained on our website @ www.logancountyhospital.org and returned to: Logan County Hospital, Attn: Human Resources, 211 Cherry Avenue, Oakley, KS 67748 or you may contact Sandy Koerperich, DON @ 785-672-8109, Ext. 315. Logan County Hospital is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

American Profile

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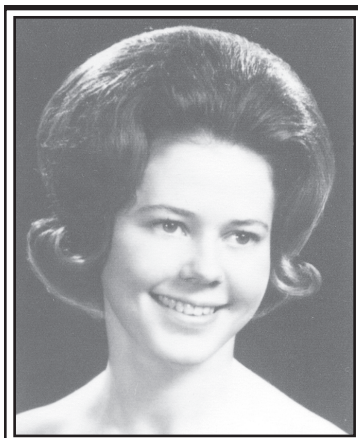
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Atwood - All Day

Slip a bit of mystery into your Valentine gift.
Include a ticket to "Murder Can Be Habit-Forming",
presented by ON STAGE, INC.

March 15, 2008 • 4 p.m. & 7 p.m.
St. Francis Community High School

Adults \$9; Students, Senior Citizens, Children \$8 Tickets available Feb. 11 through:

Cast

Beth Maifeld
Dara Carmichael
Carol Redding
Deonn Wiese
Leisha Hilt
Bruce Swihart

Tim Burr
Kip Wiese
Talley Morrow
Helene Landenberger
Amber Fromholtz
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