



The Saint Francis Herald

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20 Page Including Special Section

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Stay home! flu virus has arrived

By Karen Krien

karenk@nwkansas.com

The flu has arrived in Cheyenne County.

"The influenza virus we all have been reading about is here in its full glory," said Dr. Mary Beth Miller. "And it is at epidemic levels."

On Monday, there were 34 students missing from the St. Francis schools because of the flu. In Cheylin, there were 34 students gone on Wednesday, Feb. 20. Loretta Rucker, secretary, said the school was pretty much back to normal with most of the students back to school this week.

Many of the patients in the hospital are suffering from the flu and the Good Samaritan Village nursing home is urging people with cold or flu symptoms to not visit as the staff is trying to keep the flu from spreading throughout the facility.

The doctors are finding both strains of A and B in their testings. Symptoms include: fever, chills, body aches, sore throat, cough and headache. It is not a stomach virus but a respiratory virus.

"Not everyone has every

symptom," Dr. Miller said.

The doctors are trying to identify those patients positive for flu for two reasons: 1) if they can identify that a patient has the flu within 72 hours of onset, there is a medicine called Tamiflu that can shorten and lessen the course of the illness.

"If we start it after that 72-hour period, the medicine may not help much," the doctor said.

The second reason is to identify who has the illness, then try and treat the immediate family, thus preventing them from becoming ill.

The medical staff is strongly encouraging anyone who is sick to be evaluated and treated if indicated.

"More importantly - STAY HOME!" Dr. Miller said.

"If you are sick, don't go to work, don't go to school, don't go to social activities.

"We are at epidemic status and unless we can slow the exposure, things are going to get worse."

Other recommendations in preventing the flu include good and frequent hand washing and to

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WHAT A WHOPPER — Cody Baxter, right, caught a big fish on Sunday at Keller Pond. Brother Jesse, left, and Kenny Adams check it out. Herald staff photo by Casey McCormick

Severe weather season is here

By Karen Krien

karenk@nwkansas.com

In March 2007, a tornado moved through Cheyenne County near Bird City, destroying farm houses and outbuildings. Now, March is just days away and it is time to begin thinking about what to do in case another tornado strikes.

Typically, the first severe thunderstorms rumble across the tri-state area in late March or early April.

Last year, the first tornado in the area developed on March 24 in Yuma County, Colo., and just a few days later on March 28, a record number of 16 tornadoes were spotted. The tornado which went through the Bird City area traveled 34 miles starting in Sherman County.

Gary Rogers, emergency preparedness manager, says it's time to prepare for the severe weather season.

The National Weather Service Forecast office in Goodland is offering a storm spotter class in St. Francis starting at 6:30 p.m. on March 4 in the high school cafeteria.

Whether people want to be a volunteer spotter or just want to learn more about severe weather, they are welcome to attend the classes which are free. The class lasts around two hours and some of the topics will be the severe weather climatology, a review of the tornados and other severe weather found last year, storm structure and evolution, weather safety and how to report severe weather events.

Those unable to attend the St. Francis class can also attend classes in neighboring communities. Classes will be held in Atwood on March 10 at the Prairie Development Center; in Goodland on March 12 at the National Guard Armory; in Benkelman at the High School Distance Learning Room. All classes begin at 6:30 p.m. (in Goodland, the class is set on mountain time).

For more information, contact the National Weather Service, Goodland, at 785-899-7119, or talk to Mr. Rogers, 785-332-2560.

Congressman draws crowd

By Karen Krien

karenk@nwkansas.com

Congressman Jerry Moran was in St. Francis on Thursday as one of the stops in his listening tour. The congressman generally draws a big crowd but Main St. Coffee shop was filled with interested and inquiring adults as well as Steve Jenkins' high school government class.

He talked about his goals which included to pass the Farm Bill; energy, conservation, health care and repealing or reforming the "No Child Left Behind" program.

Mr. Moran as senior member of the House Agriculture Committee, has been working to create a better awareness and understanding in Congress of the financial strain farmers are experiencing. The price of fertilizers, natural gas and other costs are creating a

financial hardship.

He said that there are more urban congressmen than rural congressmen and over half of the money in the farm bill goes to nutrition and food stamps. He said he wants to make sure the direct payments continue.

The farm bill is still uncertain, he said it will take more money and it is unsure where the additional revenue will be found.

"The White House needs to remember that the farm bill is primarily about farmers and making sure they are able to provide food and fuel for our country.

Oil dependency

He said he is concerned about the country's dependency on foreign oil. He doesn't want to increase the supply even though people complain about the price, he said.

"We need to get the bioenergy market open," he said.

For the U.S. to remain competitive in a global market, citizens must have an ample energy supply that is affordable, reliable and environmentally responsible. More than 60 percent of this country's oil is imported from foreign countries.

"Oil provides our country with many economic benefits, it is important that we continue to advance technologies to help reduce our dependence on domestic and foreign sources of oil," he said.

He recognized that high gas prices are a challenge for rural Kansas where people travel longer distances for work, school and other necessary items.

These higher prices have also See CROWD on Page 7

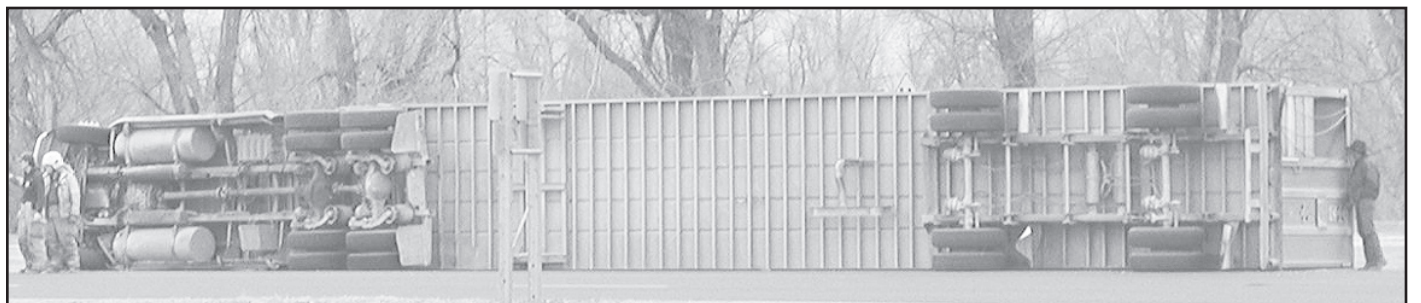


RODNEY BRACELIN, St. Francis, was one of over 50 attending Congressman Jerry Moran's listening tour held in St. Francis on Thursday. Herald staff photo by Karen Krien



FIREMEN USED the cutting tool to get the hogs free from the trailer. Derrick Tice uses the tool while George Harper helped.

Herald staff photos by Casey McCormick



Thirteen hogs dead in accident

By Karen Krien
karenk@nwkansas.com

Saturday morning, a semi truck and trailer loaded with 164 hogs, rolled down the hill south on K-27 2-miles west of St. Francis. However, when the driver went to turn east on U.S. 36 at the bottom of the hill, the truck was unable to make the curve and rolled the semi over on its side.

The driver, Domitio Rodriguez, 43, was not injured, but 13 of the hogs were killed or injured to where Dr. Judy Baxter and her assistant Amy Hathaway, had to euthanize them.

There were a number of people helping with the accident which was worked by Kansas State Trooper, Terry Rieger. Sheriff Craig Van Allen, firemen and emergency medical technicians arrived on the scene in record time. Rodney Shay and Ryan Shay had earlier loaded panels and were able to get them to the accident immediately so there was a place to round up the hogs as the firemen released them through the opening they had cut.

The semi was out of Colorado and owned by Scholl Transport. The hogs belonged to Seaboard Farms, based out of Shawnee Mission.



WE'RE OUTTA' HERE!! The firemen had to cut the hogs out of the trailer Saturday. Dr. Judy Baxter, left, was on hand to help out.