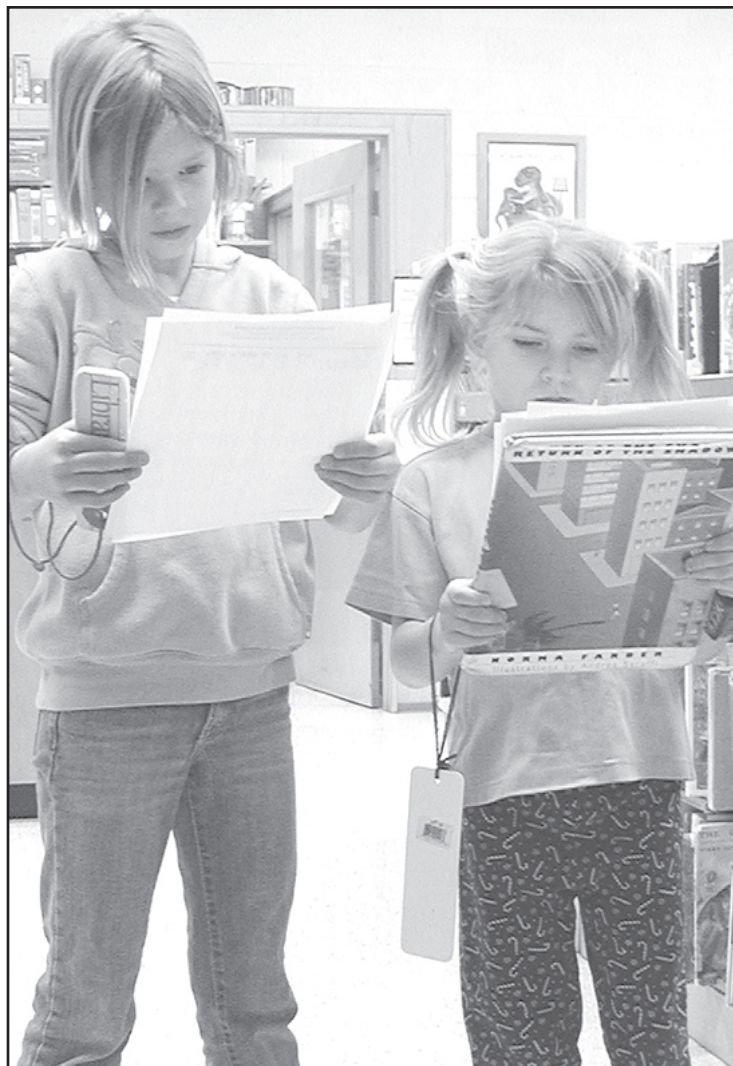


# Students return from the holiday



**BACK TO WORK!** School was back to normal this week as Christmas vacation came to a halt. (left) Joslyn Ketzner and Charlie Smith use their library passes to find something fun to read. (above) Highschool girls (l to r) Sarah Trembly, Christina Hilt, Jacquelyn Ketzner and Jodie Hilt are already deep into studying.

Herald staff photos by Karen Krien and Casey McCormick

## Emergency loans are being offered

Emergency loans are being made available by the Farm Service Agency to help qualified producers recover from production and physical losses due to severe storms, tornadoes and flooding, according to Patty Eckhardt, farm loan manager of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency for Sherman, Cheyenne and Wallace counties.

Disaster Declaration S2811 for drought, excessive heat, hail and high winds ending Aug. 14 made Sherman County eligible for emergency loans; contiguous counties also eligible include Cheyenne, Logan, Rawlins, Thomas and Wallace counties. Producers in these counties have until July 27, to apply for an

emergency loan.

Eligible loan funds may be used to restore or replace essential property and pay production costs associated with the disaster year. Applicants can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses not to exceed \$500,000. The current rate for these low interest loans is 3.75 percent.

Producers must meet eligibility requirements and not be able to obtain credit from a commercial lender. The agency will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability.

Contact the Farm Service Agency office at your local Service Center.

## Doctor offers encouragement to group

"Hang tough through the tough times and keep the vision," were the words of Dr. Mary Beth Miller when she met with the Cheyenne County Hospital Board on Dec. 22.

Dr. Miller told about when she started as a med tech in Arizona in 1979. She worked at a smaller hospital but there was a brand new state-of-the-art hospital built down the street.

We kept doing what we did best — patient care, and kept a vision at the smaller hospital, she said. The result was, the larger facility ended up closing and the smaller one gained its patients.

Her message was to hang tough through the tough times and keep the vision. She complimented the previous and present board members along with the administration, Great Plains Hospital Alliance and others for keeping a vision and moving forward.

### Funded depreciation money

Les Lacy, hospital administrator, told the board that the hospital has used money from funded depreciation to help meet payroll expenses. Amounts included \$120,000 on Dec. 5 and \$80,000 on Dec. 12. In November, the board paid to the hospital, \$80,000 and \$50,000. He said the interim cost report settlement came through which was \$130,200 and they Wisconsin Position Services (insurance company) adjusted the outpatient payments up to 70 percent of the charges.

Mr. Lacy recommended that the board do a three-month moratorium on funding depreciation which would be October, November

and December to allow the board an opportunity to recover. Jackie John, area director for Great Plains Health Alliance, said she would recommend paying back some amount on funded depreciation each month.

Mr. Lacy reported that he will be researching a Federally Qualified Health Center as an option to our current reimbursement structure. It includes several things that the hospital is already doing in its rural health clinic, including obstetrics and operating a county health department.

### Financials

The hospital's cash position at the end of November was weak and the Accounts Receivable continued to run high. Heidi Tice, chief financial officer, is working with the centralized billing office to overcome these issues.

We owe funded depreciation \$342,000, Mr. Lacy said. The total patient service revenue is below the budget and last year. The Blue Cross contractual is high and the billing office is working on this issue.

The St. Francis clinic revenue is higher than the budget but the expenses were also a lot higher than budgeted. The Bird City Clinic revenue is also high and the expenses were lower than what was budgeted.

Jane Young, board member, said she had been receiving statements that say it is not coded correctly or check with your insurance. Kari Gilliland, board member, said she received them, too. Mrs. Tice said that had been addressed with the billing office and they increased the number of days to 60 for

insurance but she will check into it again.

Mr. Lacy reported that the county budget printed in the newspaper showed that the hospital will be receiving \$644,539 rather than the \$575,000 previously approved by the commissioners due to budget amendments.

### Strategic planning

A report of status on the Strategic Plan was presented to the board. Current focus areas are: a. Market Share; b. Financial; c. Work Force; d. Community; e. Facility.

A monthly board strategic agenda was also included to annualize the process of strategic planning.

Mrs. Young asked about the workforce at the hospital, including how many staff members were close to retirement. Mr. Lacy said a human balance sheet will be put together of all employees so those can be identified who are nearing retirement and a plan can be put in place to replace them.

Jerry Toler, board member, said he does not want to wait until September to review the strategic plan as outlined in the board agenda, with the upcoming projects that need to be addressed it needs to be looked at sooner.

Mr. Lacy reported that he plans to revise the strategic plan with input already received from the board and employees, refine it with input from medical staff and then come back to the board with it.

### Establishing a foundation

Kari Gilliland, board member, asked about what efforts need to be set in place to move forward on establishing a foundation?

Great Plains Health Alliance has a structure already and Mrs. Young recommended Cathy Domsch, Bird City, as a resource. She said she has a lot of foundation experience.

Mrs. Gilliland reported that the Cheyenne County Development Corporation is working on a presentation for the schools on jobs that are available in our county. The hospital should work with them on all the different types of professional jobs that are available at the hospital and clinic.

### In other business

In other business: Bill Wilger, maintenance, has been working on the inside of the hospital's garage so he can move his office out there.

A music option will be added to the speaker system along with the overhead paging to help improve privacy for patients.

The Primary Care Clinic grant will be in the amount of \$70,900.

The cardiac monitors have been installed.

Amanda Jensen has been hired as the part-time administrative assistant in county health.

The 2009 budget was presented to the board with a projected loss of \$525,818 for the fiscal year ending December 31. The budget was approved.

### Next meeting

The next hospital board meeting will be held at 3 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 22, in the St. Francis Clinic basement meeting room.

*Editor's note: The above article as taken from the Dec. 22 minutes of the Cheyenne County Hospital Board meeting.*

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,  
Inflation is a tax on savings. In 1933, FDR's New Deal (Change) to fix the Depression illegalized owning gold/ Not tied to value, lo... the green backs float! When wages were \$1 an hour, bread was 10 cents a loaf. Had you banked it for interest, what can it buy now?

Government is to set standards, not redistribute wealth. (Where doth the Constitution permit taxing everybody to benefit anyone?)

Name anyone overlooked by church charity, the compassion of God, unworthy of thy personal help, entitled to tax dollars? Nary anyone's Social Security tax was ever saved and returned to them plus interest?

If anyone else foisted this pyramid, ponzi, chain letter scheme, they would be incarcerated! If family and the church cannot take care for their own, how can they support everybody else's kin?

Would even Karl Marx cringe at this utopian nightmare of welfare gifts, subsidies exceeding the legal exemption for a taxpayer?

In 1957, a German farmer plowing with a cow and a horse, told me America made a big mistake helping

Russia! Had the U.S.A. stayed out, Germany would have conquered the U.S.S.R. and collapsed trying to police that huge mass of land.

Sending troops out to save the world while illegals are flooding the U.S.A. is national suicide!

The Replicates (A Replicat is a Democrat faking Republican, or a Republican faking Democrat) only twice balanced the budget since F.D.R. Their wars for false prosperity cost all the dead corpses.

Irresponsible bailouts-whose next? Who will bail out the U.S.A.? Trillions of debt burdening generations to come is taxation without representation and morally wrong! If \$700 billion is about \$2,300 per member of every family, what is the total debt prorated to every citizen?

Abolish retirement dollars for every elected official! Dock their pay by the same percent as the deficit!

"But if any provide not for his own family, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." 1 Timothy 5:8.

Frank Sowers, Benkelman, Neb.

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