

Country home decorated for the Christmas season

By Karen Krien

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The Rethkes are lit up again! Living 6 miles north on K-27 and 1 mile west on Road S, Kip and Patsy Rethke's home can be seen from the highway. It is no wonder as there are right at 25,000 lights signaling the beginning of the Christmas season.

"I love Christmas and decorating for it," Mrs. Rethke said.

She is always on the lookout for something new to add to her Christmas decorations. This year, she had the hired man build "Santa's Workshop." After the holiday last year, she gave Virginia Fiedler an order to sew her up a Santa and some elves, which she had ready when she began decorating.

Mrs. Rethke started decorating in October. When the weather was too cold to go out, she worked on the inside where she has around 25 K-Mart bears with the original tags and numbers. There are also other stuffed animals and dolls joining the bears which surround the huge, decorated Christmas tree.

There is garland, dolls dressed for the holiday, musical animals, animated scenes and a Christmas village. Some of the musical decorations are motion sensitive and, the other evening, Mr. Rethke sneezed and one of the decorations began playing Christmas music.

Outside, there are 24 trees with each tree adorned in 168 twin-

klings lights. The antique farm equipment has lights, some moving lights and there are scenes, sleighs and blowup Christmas ornaments. Anything that will hold a light or decoration is lit up. The fence which surrounds the yard is lit up with LED lights.

This year, she purchased about \$500 in lights. Mr. Rethke and son, Randy, put in more outlets but something happened Thursday night when she turned them on and fuses were burned out in

many of the strings. Each string of lights has a small fuse in the plug in and she and Randy spent a lot of time replacing the fuses.

She shops the Thrift Store in St. Francis and has found several different decorations.

All of the work she goes to is appreciated by many that attend a Christmas party. It is also worth the drive to see the lights. Those getting close enough will also be able to enjoy the Christmas music.



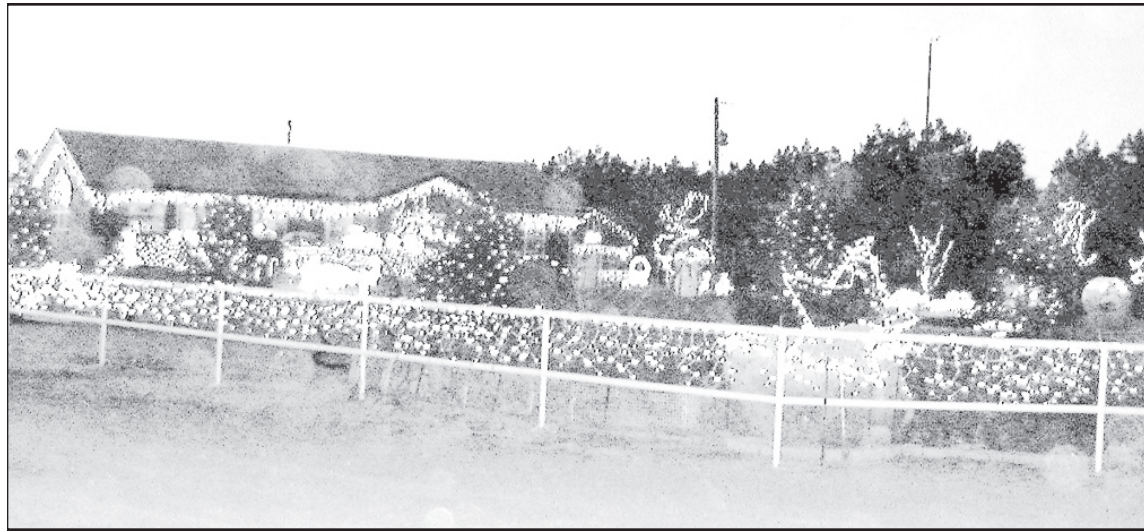
PATSY RETHKE spends days getting all the lights and Christmas decorations ready for the display.



SHANNON SEMLER helps in the 'Santa Workshop' at the Rethke home.



BEARS, BEARS AND MORE BEARS surround the Rethke's Christmas tree.



THE 25,000 LIGHTS make the Christmas display at the home of Kip and Patsy Rethke. Herald staff photos by Karen Krien

Herald And Times Happenings:

Christmas seen through the eyes of a child is priceless

This year, as in the year's past, the Special Christmas and New Year's sections will be published before the holidays. The sections will feature letters from Santa, answers of questions asked of school children, memories and recipes.

The Saint Francis Herald and Bird City Times staffs welcome participation from children to adults. All items must be received by Dec. 8 in order to get them into the special section.

Send letters, special memories, articles and recipes to The Herald at P.O. Box 1050, St. Francis, KS 67756 or fax 785-332-3001, or drop them off or e-mail to sfherald@nwkansans.com titling the subject as "Christmas for the Paper."



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