



Man makes attempt to rescue those on top of the McCook Light Plant.

Flood of '35 destroys McCook Light Plant

By Karen Krien
karen.k@nwkanssas.com

Two weeks ago, The Saint Francis Herald featured the 1935 Republican River flood that laid a path of destruction from Colorado, through the northwest corner of Kansas, then up to Benkelman and McCook. There were reports of damage as far as Missouri but the brunt of the flood was in Colorado, northwest Kansas and up through Nebraska.

Joy Hayden with The National Weather Service in Goodland gave an interesting presentation at the Cheyenne Theater in St. Francis on Saturday, May 22, with around 150 people attending.

Ms. Hayden had compiled a great deal of information concerning the flood which can be found on the National Weather Service web site. Part of the information was about how the flood had affected McCook and the McCook Light Plant written by James Jaquet, general manager of the light plant. There is a movie clip showing how the flood moved in and eventually destroyed the plant.

The information tells when the water flow hit the valley, it was flowing 200 times normal. The peak flow near McCook was 171,000 cubic feet of water per second.

The flood reached McCook the morning of May 31 and reached its peak that afternoon. At about 4 a.m., the operator on duty at the McCook power plant sent out the warning that water was running in the ditch north of the power plant. Employees were called along with other men to fill sacks with sand and cinders. A wall of bags was

built around the doors to keep out the water.

As the water continued to rise, more bags were secured and more shovels purchased until there were enough for all men. In a short time, the land outside of the wall of bags was entirely under water. The sand bag walls were not very long but the 30 or more men working on them could not keep ahead of the water.

Soon there was a cry from one of the men building the front walls that water was washing out our sand bags and all the men around rushed into the plant. In a few seconds, the horrific force of the water obliterated all signs of the 4-foot rampart. The walls at the rear of the plant gave way. Water was being directed again the doors and seepage was becoming a serious problem.

Phone calls were exchanged with the company office and the chief dispatcher of the railroad company to keep posted on the water situation up the river. At 11 a.m., word was received that the water had risen at the rate of 2 feet in 10 minutes at Culbertson.

There were men on the top of rail cars outside the plant and they began to float away so they were able to get on the roof of the plant. The water was rising in the plant and the men on the top of the huge motors were able to also get to the roof after a board was forced through the roof. Here, the men spent the next 24 hours.

There was a crowd gathered on the bank some 400 feet away and they were shouting but the roar of the water was deafening. However, they were working toward

trying to save the men.

The insulators were shot off one of the wires from land to the power plant. With a telephone cable car and hand line, they were able to rescue two men. But, when it came to the third rescue, the power poles were washed out. A man fell into the water and was picked up down stream. Ms. Hayden noted that the water was thick and foul. He had swallowed much of this water and his health was never good again.

The big water tank which was in front of the building, fell over, missing the roof. Later it swung against the building which diverted the water. Several other attempts were made in row boats and a large platoon.

As the evening arrived, the wind blew and there was a dust storm and a tornado. The men sat on the roof that night, listening to the waves and creaking of the building, wondering how much the walls could stand the force of the water.

When dawn came, several attempts were made to send small boats with sandwiches, coffee and water. It was the first food the men had eaten for more than 24 hours. Later, the small boats were back and took three of the men back. One had injured his hand and needed to see a doctor.

Finally at 2:30 p.m., they were able to wade out on a sand bar and a large boat met them and took them, six or seven at a time, back to land.

Editor's note: The above information was taken from a story which was put on The National Weather Service web site.

Board discusses plans

By Karen Krien
karen.k@nwkanssas.com

There will be no new rest rooms at the fairgrounds, at least for the time being.

At the Thursday evening Cheyenne County Fair Board meeting, Dick Bursch said that after the last fair board meeting, he had gotten a call from one of the county commissioners telling his disapproval of spending \$20,000 for rest rooms on the grounds.

The next day, he said, a commissioner complained about the weeds under the grandstand. Mr. Bursch said he explained that it had rained and it was wet but someone would get it mowed.

Lacy Reed, on the other hand, had a thank you note from the Extension office commending the board on how nice the grounds looked for the Spring Livestock Show.

The next meeting will probably fall about harvest time. The board agreed they needed a workday before the fair and will have the next meeting at the fairgrounds instead of the courthouse unless there is rain.

Lampe Hardware had been called to turn on the water in the bathrooms in Jenkins Hall before the livestock show. The company had also repaired a water line and sewer line at the grounds.

Candi Douthit, who is planting garden areas on the grounds, is planning on spreading rubber chips instead of wood chips as the wood chips blow away. Jared Douthit said that even if they cost just a little more, they wouldn't need to be replaced every year.

Building rent

The building where events are held is rented. Once again, the rent for the building was discussed. Karol Lohman, fair board member, said a wedding reception was to be held there and it was suggested that a better stove and refrigerator be installed, noting that one of the businesses in downtown St. Francis would soon have a better stove and refrigerator for sale. The board agreed that both the appliances were satisfactory.

John Finley, member, and Ms. Lohman had discovered that there was only one broom; that there had been three at one time. It had been suggested that some dry mops be purchased. This would clean the floor better than brooms. The board agreed that the mops be bought.

Ms. Lohman brought up the subject of rent which is \$100 a day. Some people need a day to set up and a day

to take down and had expressed that they didn't think the \$100 should be charged for these days.

The board pointed out that it costs money for utilities and upkeep and it wasn't fair to the taxpayers to pay for parties. Mark Mills, member, thought that all entities, Extension, hospital and law enforcement, just to name some, should also pay. It appeared to be the consensus of the majority of the board that these entities do not have to pay.

The contract had been turned into the county attorney to review. When she is done, Mrs. Reed will type up the changes for the new contract which states that the building will be rented for \$100 a day. If keys are not turned in the next day, the renter will pay another \$100.

Fair entertainment

Gary Cooper and Joe Hoffman reported on fair entertainment. Mr. Hoffman said he had spoken for 40 head of steers at \$8 a run for the steer roping. If it rains and the cattle aren't needed, they will not be charged for them. The board will pick them up and deliver them.

Mr. Cooper said Ruth Milliken and Music Club members have the talent show underway. He said the stage needs work done and he didn't want to wait until the last minute. It was agreed that the stage work will be made within the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Cooper said there are still a lot of things to be done like finding announcers, timers, chute help, flag people, just to name a few.

Report from the Extension office

Linda Elfers, representing the Extension office, thanked the board for getting the fairgrounds cleaned up for the Spring Livestock Show. She said the Spring Horse Show would be held June 20 and there may need some extra mowing behind the livestock barn.

She had questions about the duffle bags, trophies and belt buckles. The bags, the board said, will go to those winning grand and reserve in the livestock categories. There will be belt buckles for the round robin champions. The over all championships of each species will receive a belt buckle provided by Bumper to Bumper and bags will be given to the reserve champions. Everything but the large animals will be given the same awards as in year's past.

Last year, Mrs. Elfers said, there were less 4-H food entries and she asked if the displays could be moved

in with the open class foods cases. The board approved but felt that if she felt that it would be best, then she didn't need to get permission from them.

Fairbook

Nick Ketzner, who is in charge of the fair book, said he didn't think 200 fair books were needed. Mrs. Elfers said she needed 75 books just for 4-H families. That didn't count the judges and superintendents. Mr. Douthit said he thought that 200 should be the minimum.

The board was also going to print up 500 fliers with entertainment, dates and times. After discussion, they decided for just a little more money, they could print up 500 books and they wouldn't have the fliers printed.

Agreement

Mr. Bursch said he had talked to the lawyer who had the original agreement with the Amusement Authority and the Authority, even if the games and rides are on county property, is a legal entity of their own. The fair board has no say on how the Authority members conducts business.

When Mr. Bursch and the lawyer finished discussing the matter, the lawyer put the file away and it was Mr. Bursch's understanding that it would not be brought out again.

Mr. Bursch said there is a tax form that needs to be filed and he was going to ask Bill Ehrman, Authority member, if it had been filed.

In other business

In other business:
• Mr. Bursch had done some investigating and found that the quarter movers in the carnival are illegal but the fair board is not responsible.

• Terry Miller, county clerk, told Mr. Bursch that the grandstands were paid off.

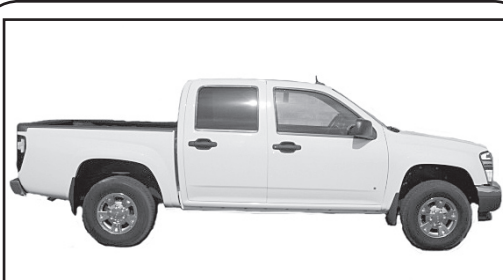
• Rain-out insurance was again discussed. The main event that brings in the most money is the demolition derby held Saturday night of the fair. For the last 10 years, the board had depended on the derby income to make the grandstand payment.

Comparing the cost of the insurance with the chance of rain (it had only rained out one derby and it had been held the following afternoon), they decided not to invest in the insurance this year. Besides, the grandstands were paid off.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the fair board has tentatively been set for 7 p.m. on July 1 at the fairgrounds.

Does your Vehicle act like it's afraid of the HEAT?
You know — over heats when the sun is out, blows hot air all the time or smokes out of the tail pipe. Well at Vince's GM Center we have a Great Selection of pre-owned vehicles. We also carry the full line of New GM Vehicles with 0% apr up to 72 months or up to \$5000.00 customer cash on select 2010 Models. Schedule your next service appointment on line 24/7.



2008 GMC CANYON
White, Leather, Sunroof



2009 CHEVY SUBURBAN
Deep Ruby, Leather



2008 CADALLIC STS
White Diamond, Heat & Cooled Seats



2008 FORD ESCAPE
Blue, Cloth, Xlt

thought to ponder.....if flying is so safe, why do they call the airport the terminal?

VINCE'S
GM CENTER

"Selling Cars for Years....Making Friends For Life."

719-346-5541 • 800-231-8991

**We Look Forward
To Serving You**

1697 Rose Ave., Burlington, Colorado

www.vincesgmcenter.com

\$10,000
Hole-In-One Prize!*

**1st Annual
BWTelcom
Father's Day
2-Man Scramble**

**Sunday
June 20, 2010**

Benkelman Country Club • Benkelman, NE

7:30 - 8:15 Registration
Coffee and Rolls

**SHOTGUN START
8:30 a.m. MDT**

ENTRY FEE: \$40 per golfer
Includes 18 holes of golf and a meal.
Cart Rental: \$15/cart

Contact: Brad Loker at 308.423.2096
or Bobbie Behlke at 308.423.5271 (evening)

Soft Spikes Only.

All alcoholic beverage are to be purchased at the clubhouse.

Any violations will result in disqualification without reimbursements
*Prize awarded to first golfer with a hole-in-one on Hole 3 of first nine.