

Conservation program signup set

A Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) signup has been announced from March 14 through April 15 according to Adrian J. Polansky, State Executive Director of U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Kansas. This is the second consecutive year that department has offered a general Conservation Reserve Program signup.

Benefits Index (EBI) that indicates the environmental benefits of enrolling land in the program. There are five environmental factors that make up the Environmental Benefits Index: wildlife, water, soil, air, enduring benefits and cost. Deci-

sions will be made following the end of the sign-up period and after analyzing Environmental Benefits Index data on all of the offers. In addition to the general signup, the continuous Conservation Reserve Program sign-up program

will be ongoing. For more information, please contact the Farm Service Agency Office at the local US Department of Agriculture's Service Center or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/crp

Sainty student enters competition

Aubree Schlepp of St. Francis, recently competed in the Stephens College Scholars competition for one of three \$60,000 scholarships.



Schlepp

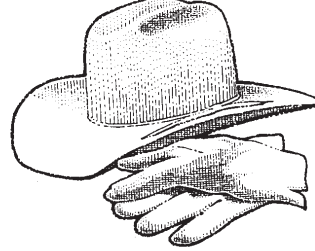
The competition included about 50 high school students from across the United States. To be eligible, students had to be accepted to Stephens, have a current grade point average of 3.5 or higher, have an American College Test (ACT) score of 25 or higher (or an Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score of 1700 or higher), and submit a writing sample.

During the two-day competition, Schlepp wrote a qualifying essay, was interviewed by two faculty members and participated in various group activities.

Schlepp, a senior at St. Francis Community High School, is the daughter of Spencer and Lisa Schlepp. She plans to major in fashion communication.

FFA team competes, takes second place

Five St. Francis Community High School FFA members participated in the District Horse Contest on Thursday, March 10, in Oakley. Representing St. Francis were Laura Brunk, Allison Grice, Gavin Cooper, Thomas Douthit and Gaten Cooper.



There were three halter classes, two of them geldings and one mare. The performance classes included Western Pleasure, English Pleasure and Horsemanship. St. Francis as a team place sec-

ond overall. Individually Gavin Cooper came in fifth and Laura Brunk, eighth.

The judging team will be attending the Hays Livestock Contest on Saturday, March 19.

WELCOME

Continued from Page 1

and hospital personnel, and other people were showing up to help wherever they could, and Village staff, whether they were scheduled to work or not, were there.

Everything went like it was supposed to, Mrs. Siegfried said. No residents were hurt, not even a skin tear. Two residents went to the hospital because it was better for them, Mrs. Siegfried said. The rest of the residents were taken to the high school gym.

It wasn't until after she had reached the gym did she think about getting ahold of the Good Samaritan Society. Somehow, she said, the society personnel had gotten the high school phone number and she had a call waiting from them.

The society was concerned about many things but, everything had been taken care of - from making sure the medical carts were there, to the charts and treatments.

The concern and help from people in both communities was fantastic, she said.

We arrived at the high school around 3:30 p.m., she said, and all the residents had been placed in different facilities by 6:30.

Getting ready On Friday, many of the staff were on hand, getting the facility ready for the first two patients. The floors were swept, people were working at desks, answering phones, and lining up last minute items needed.

The cooks had a trial run which had worked well (food is prepared in the east kitchen, then brought by carts to the west wing). Deb Gohl, kitchen manager, said the first meal for residents would be glazed meatloaf, potatoes and gravy, green beans and ice cream.

Mr. Paulsen said 41 of the original 60 staff will be returning. Full-

time staff will have four 8-hour days, part-time staff would have three 8-hour days.

The staff is excited to be back to work, Mrs. Siegfried said. However, it will be important that hours are kept to a minimum as 22 residents are not enough to make the facility pay for itself. It will help when there are 32 residents but, it is still not the 48 residents that lived at the home before the fire.

Mrs. Siegfried is hoping the county will agree to take over the nursing home, leasing it to the Good Samaritan Society. The society, she said, has invested a lot in equipment and knows all the state and federal rules and regulations. The aides have hand-held electronic charting devices and the nurses are scheduled to have them by this summer. There are new phone and computer systems as well as patient lifts and all the furniture.

While Mrs. Siegfried is hoping there will never be another fire at the Village, Mr. Paulsen said he is confident she would handle the situation well again. "She is a hero!" he concluded.

APPLAUDS

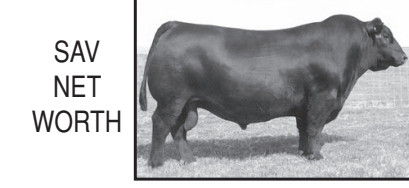
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House leaders praised Rep. Cassidy's leadership on the issue and noted his immediate impact on the legislature.

"Representative Cassidy is a stand-out leader. That's been clear since he arrived in Topeka," said House Majority Leader Arlen Siegfried (R-Olathe). "He saw a problem here, and fixed it immediately. That's the kind of leadership we need, and he's done an excellent job this session."

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ST. FRANCIS BOYS' BASKETBALL TEAM — Front row (l to r): Joey McCormick, Jacob Baxter, Wyatt Landenberger, Jacob Butler, Mason Schiltz, Erik Hart; middle row: (l to r) Dillion Straub, Martin Hnizdil, Matt Tygart, Dylan Peter, Isaac Schiltz, Keegan Sherlock; back row: (l to r) Coach Jeff Beims, Jonathon Butler, Zach Zweggardt, Garrett Figgins, Brett Lampe, Gavin Cooper, assistant coach Tanner Kinen



ST. FRANCIS GIRLS' BASKETBALL TEAM — Front row (l to r): Jodie Hilt, Shayla Hilt, Jenna Hill, Shelby Cassaw, Randee Grover, Krissy Harris, Jandy Dunn, Aubrey Mills; back row: (l to r) Assistant coach David Morrow, Christina Hilt, Bailey Merklin, Jalyn McCauley, Aly Schlepp, Kaitlin Figgins, Mikaela Grace, Clarice Neitzel, Laura Brunk, Aly Marin, Sarah Trembly, coach Susan Dinkel

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Legislative News

By Ward Cassidy



120th District Representative

I had a major accomplishment in Topeka this week. My work with the fire marshal office will save several million dollars in needless spending for nursing homes, schools, and older buildings in the state.

The previous fire marshal administration overlooked the exception to the law and "over enforced" the new fire codes. They were issuing numerous citations that were unwarranted.

The acting fire marshal, Doug Jorgenson, has agreed to have his office review all citations issued to school districts during the last 18 months. The unfunded mandates were not necessary because the buildings were not dangerous.

The continued big news in Topeka is the census results. No surprise that Johnson County recorded the largest growth in the state. They already have 20 more representatives than all of western Kansas. Fifty Kansas counties have lost double-digit population numbers in the last 10 years.

We can only hope that the Governor's Rural Opportunity Zone program will develop some growth for Northwest Kansas. Fifty Kansas counties qualify for the program and all of the 120th is included.

Here is the decline of population in the 120th District the last 10 years: Cheyenne lost 439 people, Rawlins lost 447, Decatur lost 511, Norton lost 282, and Phillips lost 359. My website has all of the Kansas census data.

A bill that again exemplifies the

Governor's desire to rid the state of wasteful spending is SB 193. This bill would require a valid social security number to be given to qualify for the state food sales tax rebate. The Department of Revenue has been accepting 9,000 plus rebate forms without a social security number. The bill will save \$2.4 million. (Another example of wasteful spending). Hopefully, we can find many more areas to save the state money.

A lingering problem is this current year's budget. Discussions to reconcile the Governor's rescission bill have come to a halt as the House and Senate conferees cannot find common ground on the maintenance of effort issue concerning special education. The deadlock could result in the Governor's office making allotments or cuts in order to achieve a balanced budget this year.

The voter identification bill needs clarification and the way I understand it now is that all voters will have to show photo identification at the polls. Documentation includes college identification cards, current driver's licenses and expired driver licenses for voters over 65 years of age. I am in favor of this bill.

A bill coming forward that has a great deal of interest to any Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERs) employee is HB 2333. There were many ideas that had many people wondering where this bill was headed. Here is

the synopsis: couple KPERs normal retirement age to social security full retirement age beginning July 1, 2016. 1) Eliminate the 85 point rule, while early retirement remains unchanged. Correction workers, police, and firemen are not affected. 2) Increase the cap on employer contributions from .6 percent a year to .8 percent starting in fiscal year 2013. 3) Change the multiplier for future service from 1.75 to 1.4 beginning in fiscal year 2013 and beyond; 4) Direct the net proceeds from the sale of any state property to the KPERs unfunded liability, starting fiscal year 2013.

I would again remind people that anything you hear about being proposed still has to get 63 votes in the House, 21 votes in the Senate, and the Governor's signature.

The most talked about vote in the legislature this week was the Community Defense Act, HB 2107. It passed 91-28. The bill regulates sexually oriented businesses (SOBs) - interesting acronym. I voted for the bill.

I would again encourage people to call if they want to see me in Topeka. My secretary is Dana (785 296-7696). My e-mail is "mailto:ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov" ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov. I would also encourage you to check on my political website and questionnaire at www.wardcassidy.com.