

Third rural health works meeting held in St. Francis

The third Rural Health Works meeting was held Thursday at Riverside Recreation, St. Francis. Dr. John Leatherman, director of the Kansas Rural Health Option Project, explained the next step of the health and eldercare needs study in Cheyenne County.

On Tuesday, the phone survey began. Fort Hays State University Docking Institute personnel will be making calls throughout the county between 6 and 9 p.m. People getting these calls are asked to not hang up but answer the questions. The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete.

These questions, Dr. Leatherman explained, will help in finding what the people need and expect in Cheyenne County. Random calls will be made until there are 200 responses. It is estimated that the survey will probably take 10 days to complete. It should be noted that all answers will remain confidential.

Some of the questions asked in the survey include:

- Which medical professionals do you use for most of your routine health care? Primary care physician, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, none, others, don't know?
- When was the last time you saw your doctor for routine health care?
- What city do you go to the most to see your doctor?
- Have you or any members of your household used the inpatient or outpatient services of a hospital in the last 12 months. The caller will ask where, listing area hospitals.
- Why was a certain hospital chosen? There will be a list of reasons where the person will be given the option of answering yes or no.
- Have you ever used the services of the Cheyenne County Hospital?

• If so, what was the type of service obtained at the county hospital? Were you satisfied?

• Have you used the Bird City Clinic? If so, were you satisfied?

• In the past 2 years, what city did you go to to see the dentist? use the pharmacy? chiropractor? eye doctor? physical therapy? home health care service? massage therapy, counseling? People will also be asked if they were satisfied with the services.

• Have you used the county health department services in Cheyenne County?

• Have you used the ambulance service in the county?

• Has anyone in your family used the nursing home services in St. Francis?

• Is transportation to medical appointments a challenge?

• Do you believe there is a need for a community wellness center that has exercise classes and equipment and offers educational and wellness programs? Do you think it should include an indoor pool? Will you be willing to pay a fee to use it?

• Do you believe there is a need for an eye doctor in the county?

• Do think the hospital should offer maternity services?

• Do you think there is a need for a county inpatient treatment facility for the elderly who suffer psychiatric problems such as Alzheimer's?

• Do you intend to live in the county throughout retirement?

• Do you believe that the county's health services are adequate to sustain the needs of retirees?

• Do you see a need for single occupancy, private pay, skilled nursing rooms to be part of the current nursing home?

• Do you believe that such a facility should be added to the existing nursing home?

There are also more detailed

questions about the nursing home. Before the question, there is the explanation: "the nursing home is owned by a non-profit organization, Good Samaritan Society. The facility is only a double occupancy, skilled nursing home with independent living apartments. The property is not for sale. Since the fire in October, the nursing facility has been partially restored to accommodate fewer residents. The Society wants to transfer ownership of the facility to the county. If the county takes ownership, a tax subsidy may be required to sustain operations.

The question is, to keep the existing facility operating, would you approve of the county assuming ownership of the facility, even if it would mean partially funded by taxes?

The other question concerning the eldercare is: If after studying the county's long term care needs, it is determined that expanding the facility by adding private pay single occupancy skilled nursing rooms and assisted living apartments to the existing nursing home would make the facility more self sufficient, would you approve of the county making such additions, even if would mean being partially funded by taxes?

Answer the questions

Again, people receiving the survey calls are urged to answer the questions. It has been suggested that results of some of the survey questions be published.

Next meetings

The next meeting is set for noon on Thursday, June 23, at the Bird City Legion hall. Lunch will be served at 11:30. Results of the survey will be revealed.

The final meeting has been set for Wednesday, July 13, at Riverside in St. Francis.



ROSEMARY POWELL explains the structure of the sod house to a group of St. Francis first graders that visited the thresher grounds.

Times staff photo by Norma Martinez

Safety enhanced projects selected for aviation funding

Thirty projects that will enhance safety and service at public use airports in the state have been selected for funding under the 2012 Kansas Airport Improvement Program. Among the 30 projects is one for St. Francis to repair and seal ramps and taxi-ways, and another for Bird City for airport maintenance equipment.

The Kansas Department of Transportation will contribute \$3.54 million in funding for the projects made possible by T-WORKS, the transportation program passed by the Kansas Legislature last May. With local funds

of approximately \$714,000, the total infrastructure investment will be \$4.25 million.

"Last year we released a study that showed Kansas airports support more than 47,000 jobs, generate \$2.3 billion in payroll and produce \$10.4 billion in on-airport economic activity," said Ed Young, Kansas Department of Transportation director of aviation. "With that kind of impact, it's not only important to maintain our aviation infrastructure, but to ensure that our investments match the needs of our system plan."

Projects will address maintenance, runway, facility and equipment needs at airports in Kansas.

The Kansas Department of Transportation's division of aviation, which manages the program, received 114 project applications for projects totaling approximately \$31.6 million. Both the applications and the total requested funding were the most ever received by the department.

Under guidelines of the program, project sponsors are required to pay a minimum of 10 percent of the total project costs, up to a maximum of 50 percent based on population.

The Gardener

Kay Melia, Master Gardener
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Survey after survey shows very clearly that tomatoes are the garden vegetable of choice in all parts of the United States of America. Nearly 95 percent of all the nation's gardeners plant and nurture tomatoes in their backyard gardens.

Some are even grown in the front yard, carefully located among the petunias and the marigolds or any other bedding plant. Lots of sunshine, good fertility, and timely additions of water are about the only ingredients necessary to growing a tomato crop.

Do you know what the second most favorite garden vegetable is in America? Actually, it isn't really a vegetable. It's sweet corn! Everyone from youngsters with a few teeth to oldsters with a few teeth simply adore sweet corn.

But here's the kicker!

Less than half of all backyard gardeners in America actually grow sweet corn themselves. Most gardeners depend on the farmer's market or country friends with a two acre corn patch to obtain their sweet corn fix. The reason most gardeners give for not growing their own is "I just don't have room for it out there."

Despite a perceived shortage of space, sweet corn will produce well in the backyard, especially when planted in "blocks" instead of rows so that the pollination process is enhanced. Sweet corn is pollinated by the wind and not by bees as are most other garden crops.

But just about everyone loves sweet corn. Do you know anyone who refuses to eat it? I don't either,

and we just can't seem to get enough of it during the summer season.

The nice thing about sweet corn is that it just gets better and better. New developments in cross-breeding some of the SE, SU, and Sh2 types has resulted in an almost unbelievably sweet and tender product, without sacrificing true sweet corn flavor.

In the forefront of this type of advancement is a trademarked variety of sweet corn named Mirai, (pronounced ME-rye.). It is an altogether different type of sweet corn called "synergistic" and Mirai isn't the only one in this class...just the most well known right now, and the one that carries the most hype, as well as the best distribution.

Mirai sweet corn was developed in 1954 at Twin Gardens Farms located near Harvard, Illinois by George Ahrens and his family. He

experimented for years on his 200 acre farm where he grew mostly vegetables for the farmer's market and moonlighted as a truck driver. His experimental work has paid off, and today, the Japanese buy most of his available seed. The Japanese actually gave the corn it's name which means "the taste of the future."

The Ahrens family has added an adjacent 200 acres to their farm, and just about every acre is planted to Mirai. The crop is picked by hand so as not to injure the tender kernels that might occur with a mechanical picker, and they have developed a large mail order market.

This will be my third year of planting Marai, and I plant a yellow variety as well as a bi-color variety. It is, indeed, the best sweet corn I have ever grown. In a few years, I'm sure there will be a better one!

Club Clip

Go-Getters

The Bird City Go-Getters met at the Lutheran Church in Bird City On May 5. Roll call was answered by "What is your favorite animal?" Seven members and five adults attended the meeting.

Members making a quilt block for the state 4-H quilt. Each 4-H'er received a kit to make their own block.

911 signs will be distributed and placed near rural residences once the story regarding this runs in the local newspapers.

Fair news: It was announced that the livestock pictures are to be taken

before the premium sale. Also, the food stand will have different hours this year.

It was voted on and approved that any Go-Getter wanting to attend 4-H camp this summer, is eligible for a \$25 sponsorship from our group.

The next meeting of the Bird City Go Getters is planned for Thursday, June 2, at 6:30 at the Lutheran Church in Bird City.

Dominique Johnston
Reporter

Commissioner announces plans to run for senate office

By Cynthia Haynes

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Norton County Commissioner John Miller announced that he will run for the Kansas state senate, setting up a race against a veteran incumbent.

Miller was the first to file for the 40th District seat now held by Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer of Grinnell.

The 40th District represents 18 counties in northwest Kansas, including Decatur, Norton, Cheyenne, Sherman, Thomas, Sheridan, Rawlins, Gove, Graham, Greeley, Lane, Logan, Ness, Rooks, Scott, Trego, Wallace and Wichita.

Miller, a farmer-rancher who has been a Norton County commissioner since 1996, said Monday that his commission term would be up in 2012 and he had already decided not to run again.

"Protecting our rural way of life is my No. 1 priority," Miller said. "I want to take my experience as a county commissioner, farmer and small business owner to Topeka to ensure that our voice is being heard. Western Kansas is the foundation that our state was built on, and its health is vital to our long-term economic success."

"Rural Kansas is at a crossroads. We can - and must - do

everything in our power to create jobs, protect local services and jump start an aggressive revitalization of the rural communities that this state was built upon. That's what I will be focused on doing, and I look forward to traveling the district and talking with voters."

Miller said he was born and reared in Norton. He graduated from Norton High School and attended Colby Community College. He and his wife, a son and daughter-in-law operate the family farm and ranching operation.

Miller and Beverly have been married for 35 years and have four grown children and nine grandchildren. They also run the bowling alley in Norton.

Miller says that he is a "pro-life" candidate. He attends the Norton United Methodist Church.

In addition to his work on the

commission, Miller has served on the state Juvenile Justice Authority, the Community Advocacy Committee and the state Board of Emergency Medical Services. He is a three-term member of the Kansas Association of Counties board and serves on the board of the Kansas County Association Multiline Pool, a co-operative which handles insurance coverage.

Sen. Ostmeyer has not yet filed for re-election. He said Monday that he does plan to run for another term. The state primary election will be Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2012.

Commissioner Miller called to tell him he planned to enter the race, the senator said, but other than that, they have not talked.

Mr. Miller can be contacted at JohnMiller@ruraltel.net or by phone at (785) 871-0450.

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

I am grateful for those who joined me for my town hall meeting in St. Francis this past week. It was a good discussion and, as always, I came away with a better understanding of what Kansans expect from the Office of

the Attorney General. Thanks for helping me stay focused on the critical priorities of public safety, economic growth and personal liberty!

Derek Schmidt
Kansas Attorney General

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In Bird City: Drop off your donation at Hometown Market or Monty's Beef Jerky. In St. Francis at Parkhill Restaurant, Hilltop General Store or Uptown Meat Market or mail to Joyce Russ, treasurer, P.O. Box 673, St. Francis, Ks. 67756. Make your check payable to CheyCo July 4th. A little will help a lot. Thank you.