



Dirt work begins —



CAHOJ EARTHMOVING crew started the dirt work for the new PrairieLand Electric facility to be built east of St. Francis on U.S. 36.

Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

Ag week recognized

Kansas Governor Sam Brownback has proclaimed March 4-10 as Kansas Agriculture Week in order to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by Kansas agriculture.

"Kansas has a strong agricultural tradition that predates its statehood, and it continues today as a cornerstone of our state's economy," Gov. Brownback said. "As we look towards the future, growing agriculture in Kansas is one of my top priorities."

Kansas produces nearly \$4.9 billion in agriculture exports a year. Kansas farmers provide food for

Americans and people in 102 different countries around the world. At 28.2 million acres, Kansas has the second-most cropland of any state, and the most cropland of any state by percentage.

"With the rapid increase in the world population, the importance of agriculture is only going to increase in the future," said Secretary of Agriculture Dale Rodman. "Food production in the U.S. is going to need to double by 2050. It's a tremendous challenge, but one I'm confident Kansas farmers and ranchers will meet."

Republican caucus set for Saturday at the high school

Republicans from all over Kansas will be participating in the Kansas Republican Caucus on Saturday. Cheyenne County registered Republicans are also encouraged to participate by coming to the St. Francis Community High School cafeteria at 9:30 a.m. to sign in with the anticipation of the actual voting.

Those signing in must have government issued identification. One of the identifications that is acceptable is a driver's license. They must also be registered by Feb. 17.

Once there, registered voters will hear from representatives of each still viable candidate and then vote. The meeting begins at 10 a.m. but polls will remain open until 1 p.m.

The caucus is designed to say to the Republican National Committee how much support the state of Kansas has for the various Republican candidates.

Kansas has 40 delegates to the National Convention and it will take 1,144 delegates to nominate the ultimate GOP presidential candidate.

The caucus is different than the traditional primary in that it is run by the state party, paid for by contributions as opposed to the primary which is sanctioned and funded by taxpayers in the state. The last time a standard primary was held in Kansas was 1992.

Local results will be made known through *The Saint Francis Herald* and *Bird City Times*.

Spring forward Sunday morning

The sun is coming up earlier and the days are a little longer. However, Daylight Saving Time will arrive on Sunday, a little over a week before the first day of spring on March 20.

With the change, it will be a little darker in the mornings and the evenings will be lighter longer. Those itching to get out in the yard and garden after work will now have an extra hour. It will also give the golfers a little more time to hit those balls around Riverside Recreation.

Daylight Saving Time begins at 2 a.m. Sunday, although most people spring their clocks forward Saturday night before they head to bed. If not, they might miss church on Sunday.

While Daylight Saving Time used to come later in March, even in April, last year was the third time under federal law that it began the second weekend in March.

While there will still be some cold weather and even a snow storm or two, the time change is a small assurance that spring is on the way. Warmer weather at the first of the week made it seem like spring but it was followed by a change back to winter weather on Wednesday.

In a couple of months, school will be out, the swimming pool will be open and harvest will be just around the corner. Those below-zero temperatures will be replaced by 90+ degrees.



WARM TEMPERATURES are bringing the bulbs to life and these daffodils are getting ready to bloom.

Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

Residents look for answers

The community of Idalia and surrounding areas have formed the Idalia Restoration with the purpose of building a restaurant and bar in Idalia.

A meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Monday at the Corner Stone in Idalia. The committee is suggesting that people purchase shares to help purchase two lots of land and a new building for a bar/restaurant.

The restaurant will be arranged so people can choose the bar or family dining. There will also be a large back room which can be partitioned so there can be more than one party at a time or it can be opened up to accommodate up to 250 people.

The goal of the committee is to have the facility up and running before the construction of the new school begins.

They urge all interested people to come to the meeting on Monday. Input, suggestions and ideas are welcomed.



TREES CONTINUE TO COME DOWN on Main Street. Eric Fiala, left, and Mike Meyer, city employees, are cutting down trees that are dead or dying. They will be replaced in the future.

Herald staff photo by Tim Burr

Drug dog searches high school lockers

By Karen Krien

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A Kansas Highway Patrol officer and his drug-sniffing dog searched the St. Francis high school on Feb. 22.

The lockers were searched but no marijuana was found. The officer indicated the residual odor from marijuana on backpacks and books could be enough to make the dog hit on a locker.

Rob Schiltz, superintendent, said the administration had no hard evidence that there was marijuana. But, he said, we do think we have an issue.

We are trying to help our students, he said, and we need help from parents and the community.

Letters were sent to parents on Feb. 29 informing them of the situation.

The school administration and staff, the letter stated, are not trained to deal with this type of problem, but we feel with the help and support of parents, our students and community, we will be able to make a solid attempt at reducing the problem.

One of the greatest concerns, Mr. Schiltz said, is that we believe we have

students who think smoking marijuana is not only acceptable, but that using the drug is also a sign of being "cool," and that those who don't smoke the drug are "behind the times."

Suggestions made to parents included:

- Talk to their kids about the problem.
- Call or stop by Mr. Schiltz's office and ask if their child has been reported as a user.

- From the information the administration has received, it is obvious the kids know who the users are — ask your kid who they are so you know.

- Learn what drug users know about hiding places for their supplies and how to smoke it and mask the smell, etc.

You will be blown away by the information on the internet, Mr. Schiltz said.

YouTube gives information to users on how not to get caught smoking in their room; great stash spots at home (and never get caught), and ways to pass a drug test.

Our main concern, he said, is to assist parents with getting help for the students who are abusing drugs.