

Council looking for ways to fund electrical upgrade

By Amanda Miller
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At the St. Francis City Council meeting, there was a further in-depth discussion over how the city plans to pay for the electrical upgrade that will begin next year. So far, there have been no decisions on how to fund the six year project.

JR Landenberger, city superintendent, said that he would like to begin the process of upgrading by spring. They have a company to put together a bid package, and that will cost approximately \$2,000 to be done. The council approved the cost to get the bid documents out to begin the project.

The soonest the work will get done is in six months. However, if the city is not generating funds at that point, they will have to pay for the upgrade using the cash reserve.

Roger Jensen asked if the city has enough cash reserve in capital improvements to fund it. Mr. Landenberger said yes, but it will deplete the account, and we must find a way to replace the money.

Bruce Swihart asked, "Isn't this what the cash reserve is for?" He said he is not interested in debt and borrowing money for this project.

Roger Jensen said the cash reserves are savings accounts in case of an emergency, not to fund planned infrastructure enhancements.

The upgrade will cost \$100,000 - \$110,000 per phase, which lasts approximately a year each for six years. Mike Day, city attorney,

said this is the time. We need to specifically decide where the money is coming from. There are only two options. We can either cut expenses (which are currently at a minimum), or we can raise utility rates. Raising a mill levy is not sufficient to pay for this project.

Carla Lampe said that the city can't write a check for this project. We don't make the money per year. Bruce Swihart asked what does the city make a year? JR Landenberger said that the city has remained stable, and any utility increases have been due to an increased cost.

Roger Jensen commented that this project is going to take six years. Shouldn't we start having plans to fund this thing? Carla Lampe agreed, but said that we can't keep increasing electric rates for six years. We need to come up with other avenues.

Roger Jensen asked if there was any validity to his suggestion last time (to cut the city police and only have the county sheriff's department). Currently the city spends \$197,000 on the city police, and they can contract the sheriff's department to cover the city for \$72,000. He asked, "Why is this not a valid argument?"

Councilwoman Paula Keller said that Roger was assuming that one police force will replace the other and do better. She said that this issue is not related to the electric upgrade funding.

Bruce Swihart told Roger that he will discuss it with him outside

the meeting. Mike Day interrupted, emphasizing that any city business should be discussed inside the meeting. "It is not appropriate to discuss any city business outside the meeting, it should be discussed in an open meeting" he said.

Roger told Bruce that this is not personal. It is simply a valid point. Why are we spending \$197,000 when we could be spending \$72,000? The conversation then abruptly ended on the dissolution of the city police force.

JR Landenberger said that at the end of January it would be easier to make a decision on any rate change because they can see 2013 compared with 2012.

The question was raised on whether or not they could pay for the upgrade with a bond. Hoxie had paid for their pool by selling bonds themselves. Mike Day said there would have to be a vote on any bond issues. We might need a bond to do the project, but we will have to find a way to raise the money to get a bond. Mr. Day said he would visit with Hoxie, and others, to go over the bond process.

Mike Day reiterated that we have been talking about philosophies on how to fund this upgrade. JR is saying we need specifics. This is the time. We need to know specifically where the money is coming from.

Scott Schultz, mayor, said that there will need to be further discussion. No decisions were made on how to fund the electrical upgrade.



VISITING WITH SANTA Friday evening were Alexis, Garrett and Wyatt Zimelman. Look for more photos with Santa in future issues of The Herald.

Herald staff photo by Doug Sloper



FIREWORKS LIT the winter sky as the Parade of Lights started Friday night. Rodney Neitzel was in charge of the fireworks.

Herald staff photo by Doug Sloper

Start a emergency supply kit

As cold weather sets in, the risk of being stranded in a vehicle or at home with out electricity is a very real possibility. It is recommended that emergency supply kits be kept in the home and in vehicles.

The following list is provided by Federal Emergency Management Agency. Remember that this is a basic list, and if there are other items you or your families may need, add them to the kits:

Water- one gallon of water

per person per day. (Three days is suggested); Food- a three day supply of non-perishable food. (if this is canned, it is imperative to have a manual can opener); battery powered or hand crank radio; flashlight with extra batteries; first aid kit; whistle to signal for help; garbage bags for personal sanitation; cell phone with charger.

Items that should be included if they are needed by members of your family: medications; glasses;

infant formula and diapers; pet food and water; feminine supplies and personal hygiene items; books, games or puzzles for children.

It is important to also keep in your vehicle: a shovel; cat litter; a change of clothes (weather appropriate); a blanket.

Those at home who are dependent on electricity for medical needs, a generator is recommended.

Christmas service set

Salem Lutheran Church will host its ninth annual "Christmas in the Country" Songfest on Saturday, Dec. 14, at 5 p.m. with prelude music beginning at 4:30. The program includes favorite carols performed by several groups.

The congregation will sing carols in German and English and the Christmas Gospel will be read in both languages in honor of the Black Sea Germans from Russia who started the church in 1901.

The historic Salem Lutheran Church was built in 1926 by members of the congregation. It measures 36 by 66 feet and has a full basement, balcony, a 75-foot tower, and 2-ton bell in the belfry.

It is the second church built on the same site, at the corner of Road 9 and Road R eight miles northwest of St. Francis.

The public is invited to attend this service of music and the spoken word. A free-will offering will be received and given to local helping agencies.

Food and fellowship will follow in the basement. Donations of finger food are welcome and can be brought to the kitchen before the service.

Smoky Hill Public Broadcasting Service taped the service last year, and the 90-minute program can be seen on that channel during December. It was aired Nov. 30,

and will be repeated Dec. 16, and Dec. 25, both at 8 p.m.

DVDs of the the 90-minute, 2012 program may be ordered for \$20 each through Salem Lutheran Church, if ordered no later than Dec. 9 by mail. Send a check to Salem Lutheran Church, to Keith Zwegardt, 945 Road R, St. Francis, KS 67756. After that, checks must be delivered to the Zwegardt residence by noon Dec. 13. DVDs are also available for \$25 by calling Smoky Hill PBS directly at 1-800-337-4788. DVDs are not guaranteed to arrive before Christmas. When they arrive, a pick-up time and place in St. Francis will be announced.

Bird City man holds show

By Janet Carman

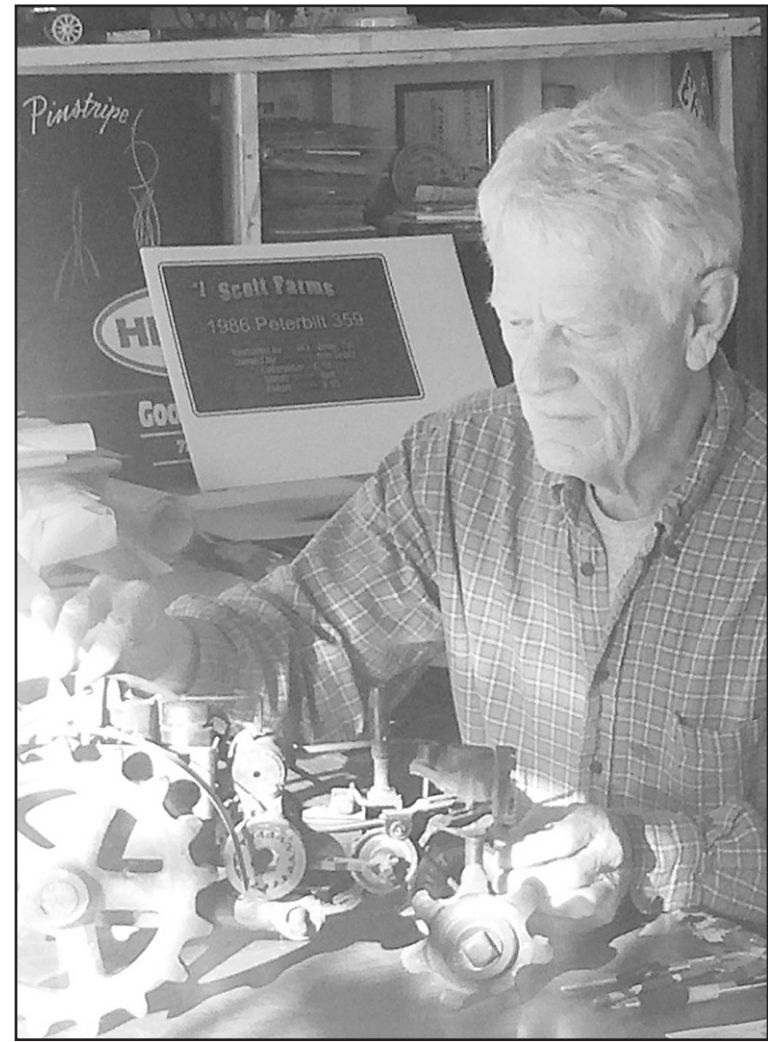
Metal art created by Mike Boyson, Bird City artist, will be on display at Quincy Gallery, 109 N. Quincy, beginning Dec. 5.

Mike began making replicas of steam engines and tractors in the late 1980s. The secretary of the Bird City Antique Steam Engine and Thresher Association became excited about Mike's project. He and others donated junk pieces of metal and bins of bolts, lug nuts, gears and washers. Underwood Implement gave him old tractor gears they had stored.

Mr. Boyson has spent a lot of time studying antique engines and tractors. He says that putting these old parts together to replicate them "just seemed like the right thing to do at the time."

Cheyenne Center for Creativity is hosting a "Meet the Artist" reception at Quincy Gallery from 7 to 9 p.m. on Thursday. Come on over, visit with him and view his metal sculptures which include: a Case steam engine, an Altman Taylor kerosene tractor, a Titan kerosene tractor, Russel and Huber steam engines, and an Oil Pull tractor. In addition, his sculpture, "From the Earth," will be displayed.

Hot apple cider, coffee and refreshments will be served.



MIKE BOYSON works on one of his pieces which will be on display at the art show beginning Dec. 5 at the Quincy Gallery.

Photo courtesy of Janet Carman