

Hospital staff meets with county commissioners

By Karen Krien
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Three members of the hospital staff met with the Cheyenne County Commissioners at their Monday, Jan. 13, meeting. They had a review of the November volume, staffing and other information for the commissioners.

Judy Rockwood, administrator and director of nurses at the Cheyenne County Hospital, was the speaker for the group. Also accompanying her were Heidi Tice and Shara Johnson.

Ms. Rockwood pointed out that the December information was not available but she thought the information sheet she had prepared would help the commissioners better understand what was going on at the hospital.

The hospital is needing a Dexa Scan machine, which measures bone density, and will cost

\$27,000 to \$35,000. Ms. Rockwood said the hospital was notified before the first of the year that the Dexa Scan service which had come to St. Francis was discontinuing this service because it was too far to travel. The volume for the Dexa Scan, she said, is not real busy, but we will be able to market it to surrounding areas. The equipment, she said, will bring in some money, but not a lot.

She said that the county hospital is one of 83 Critical Access Hospitals in Kansas. Kansas has the most Critical Access Hospitals in the United States.

Critical Access Hospitals are certified to receive cost-based reimbursement from Medicare. The reimbursement is intended to improve hospital's financial performance and maintain access to basic health care in rural areas,

she said.

In November, the report showed that there were 3,252 outpatients which, Ms. Rockwood said, was one of the highest numbers recorded. There were 31 inpatients patients, 65 emergency room visits, 534 clinic visits, 11 surgeries and over 48 specialty clinic visits.

The staff includes 80 employees. Seventy-four are full time and six are part time. There are 18 employees that do not receive benefits, including two dietary, three respiratory therapy, nine nursing, one physical therapy and two physicians.

Ernie Ketzner, commissioner, asked how much the hospital paid in wages. Mrs. Tice said the payroll is approximately \$200,000 a month and that included doctors, nurses, technicians, cooks and janitors – everybody, she said.

School board holds meeting

By Amanda Miller
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The St. Francis Community School Board held a short regularly scheduled meeting on January 9.

All members of the school board were present except Ed Marin. The board reviewed and discussed the items on the consent calendar, and approved the minutes and list of bills to be paid.

School funding

Superintendent Rob Schiltz reminded the board that Governor Sam Brownback would be presenting his State of the State address Wednesday, Jan. 15. Mr. Schiltz encouraged the board to listen to the governor's address, saying it usually helped shed some light on issues regarding school finance.

In the State of the State address, Governor Brownback delivered what was considered a

stern message to the courts about who bankrolls education in Kansas. He also argued that schools are well funded in Kansas.

There is a landmark court case on school finance looming, and the court could rule any day on a lawsuit seeking millions of dollars in added state funding for local school districts. The governor and other conservatives argue that the court oversteps its authority by prescribing specific funding levels for schools.

During his speech, the governor rebuffed critics who say he does not support schools, citing mainly his plan to fund all-day kindergarten in Kansas. Funding all-day kindergarten could help bring financial relief to the St. Francis Community Schools, where kindergarten students already attend all-day. The proposed funding would have generated an extra \$34,542 in general

state aid for St. Francis this current school year.

Time will be set aside to discuss school finance further at the February board meeting.

New business

Superintendent Rob Schiltz presented a letter of resignation from his position as junior high boys' basketball coach.

Mr. Schiltz reported that one of the smaller school buses had been sold for \$3,500 to Colby Public Schools.

A thank you note was read from Jeff Olofson, thanking the board for allowing him to attend the National Science Teacher's Convention in Denver last month. He said he greatly enjoyed the opportunity.

Next Meeting

The next school board meeting will be held on Feb. 13 at 7 p.m. in the administration office at the high school.

Low income energy assistance

Heating your home during the winter months can create a financial burden. In an effort to help keep Kansans warm this winter, the Kansas Department for Children and Families will soon begin accepting applications for its Low Income Energy Assistance Program.

"Although we're experiencing a comfortable January week, winter has just begun," said Phyllis Gilmore, secretary for Department of Children. "The winter months can bring frigid temperatures and we want families to be able to escape the cold in the warmth of their homes."

The energy assistant program provides an annual benefit to help qualifying households pay winter heating bills. Persons with disabilities, older adults and families with children are the primary groups assisted. In 2013, nearly

48,000 households received an average benefit of \$489.

To qualify, applicants must be responsible for direct payment of their heating bills. Income eligibility requirements are set at 130 percent of the federal poverty level. The level of benefit varies according to household income, number of people living in the home, type of residence, type of heating fuel, and utility rates.

Applicants must demonstrate that they have made payments on their heating bill two out of the last three months. Those payments must be equal to or exceed \$80 or the total balance due on their energy bills, whichever is less.

Applications for the program have been mailed to households that received energy assistance last year. Energy assistance applications are also available at local department of children offices

and through partnering agencies. They can be requested by calling 1-800-432-0043.

Applications will be accepted from Jan. 21 to March 31.

Income eligibility determination includes: one person living in the home with a maximum allowable monthly income of \$1,210; two people in the home with monthly income of \$1,639; three people in the home with monthly income of \$2,068; four people with income of \$2,497; five people, income of \$2,926; six people with income of \$3,355. Add \$429 for each additional person.

Funding for the Low Income Energy Assistance program is provided by the Department of Health and Human Services, office of Community Service through the Federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Drug enforcement makes arrests

More arrests have been made in the recent Goodland Police Department, Sherman County Sheriff's Office and Kansas Bureau of Investigation drug enforcement effort.

Six warrants remain outstanding of the 18 issued last Friday.

Fabian Ledesma, 22, is wanted for distribution of a non-controlled substance as a controlled substance, conspiracy to commit, and misdemeanor theft.

Anadelia Ledesma, 24, is wanted for conspiracy to commit distribution of methamphetamine and distribution of a controlled substance using a communication facility.

James Sheats, 20, is wanted for distribution of oxycodone, conspiracy to commit distribution of oxycodone, distribution of a controlled substance using a communication facility and no drug tax stamp.

Richard Connell, 26, is wanted for aggravated endangering of a child.

Michael Garza, 36, is wanted for distribution of methamphetamine, distribution of controlled substance using communication facility, distribution of non-controlled substance as controlled substance and no drug tax stamp.

Nicholas Slusher, 33, is wanted for distribution of oxycodone, conspiracy to commit distribu-

tion of oxycodone, distribution of controlled substance using communication facility and no drug tax stamp.

In addition to Marco Ault, Connie Larson, Peter Hopkis, Vernon Lovins, Fernando Martinez, Mathew Slusher, Harold Slusher and Kimberly Wessel, one other person was arrested last Friday in connection with the case. Mark Ricks was booked in to the Sherman County Bastille on charges of sale and distribution of opiates and narcotics and arranging sale or purchase using a communication device.

Another search warrant was served on Saturday that resulted in two people booked into the county jail. Paula Rumpel was booked on charges of sale and distribution of opiates and narcotics and arranging sale or purchase using a communication device. Dale Quast was booked on charges of sale and distribution of opiates and opiates and narcotics, distribution of hallucinogenic drugs and possession of drug paraphernalia with intent to store or ingest.

A press release issued Monday by the Police Department said it and the Sheriff's Office served the search warrant at a home in the 500 block of West Ninth St. The law enforcement agencies had information that illegal narcotics were being sold from the home,

and found drug paraphernalia and narcotics during the search.

"We are proud to work with our colleagues at the Sheriff's Office to help address this problem affecting our jurisdictions," said Police Chief Cliff Couch. "We will continue working to make Goodland a horrible place for drug dealers to operate."

Two additional arrests were made later. Rosalinda Martinez was booked on Sunday on charges of sale and distribution of opiates and narcotics and arranging sale and purchase using a communications device. Gary Slusher was booked on Tuesday on charges of sale and distribution of opiates and narcotics, arranging sale and purchase using a communications device and no drug tax stamp.

This string of arrests was made after a six-month-long joint investigation with local law enforcement and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.

"Our main focus has been the dealers of illegal drugs including Methamphetamine, Diverted Prescription Medication, and Marijuana," said Sheriff Burton Pianalto. "These individuals prey on the addicted to make money. Cooperation between the public and law enforcement is vital to building successful case against these predators."

FIRST BABY CONTEST

We're celebrating the first special delivery of the Year 2014!
The winning baby and parents will receive these bundles of gifts, courtesy of these businesses.

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Cheyenne County Hospital



THE FIRST BABY OF 2013 was Krissiana Grace DeJong, daughter of Lisa and Chad DeJong. She was delivered by Dr. Rebecca Allard at the Cheyenne County Hospital.

Happy First Birthday on Jan. 3, Krissiana Grace DeJong and congratulations to her parents Lisa & Chad DeJong!

Cheyenne County Hospital

Cheyenne County Hospital "The Shining Star of Rural Healthcare" 210 W. 1st Street • St. Francis, Ks. • 785-332-2104