

Response team seeks volunteers

By Amanda Miller
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The Northwest Kansas Community Emergency Response Team is seeking volunteers to serve on a new Community Emergency Response Team.

After the floods in Colorado last year, many residents of northwest Kansas were calling, wanting to know what they could do to help. Organization was key, and if something similar happened here, having a system in place would benefit the community.

Ryan Murray, Emergency Management Director, said that he saw a need for volunteers that could assist the firefighters, emergency medical personnel, and emergency management team during an emergency. The first responders will have a lot of duties to perform during an emergency. A separate group of volunteers to assist the first responders, in an organized fashion, would be beneficial.

That is when Cheyenne, Rawlins, Sherman, and Thomas counties collaborated. Mr. Murray is the Emergency Management Director of Cheyenne, Rawlins and Sherman county. Thomas county also liked the idea of the northwest counties working together in the event of an emergency, and came on board.

The counties submitted a grant project to the Kansas Citizen Corps to establish a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). This is the first plan of action of it's kind, and the state of Kansas is using northwest Kansas as a model, Mr. Murray said.

They were notified that the Kansas Division of Emergency Management, Kansas Citizen Corps, and Kansas Highway Patrol awarded the grant to fund development of the joint training program. The grant money provided will fund all the training and necessary expenses so that the counties do not incur them.

The Community Emergency Response Team Program provides basic emergency and disaster preparedness instruction to commu-

nity members through its introductory training class. The CERT introduction class is approximately 20 hours, and is free. Everyone can benefit from learning to be better prepared for an emergency or disaster.

Following a catastrophic event, such as a flood or tornado, residents may be called upon to assist with local emergency services to help protect the community.

Those selected to serve on a local CERT team will receive continuing training that will equip them to be able to assist local emergency responders. The training covers basic skills that are important to know in a disaster, when emergency services need help. With training and practice by working as a team, volunteers will be able to do the greatest good for the greatest number of people after a disaster, while protecting themselves from becoming a victim.

Basic emergency and disaster response skills training will include fire safety, light search and rescue skills, team organization, and its function within the emergency response model, basic emergency medical care and disaster medical operations, and community disaster recovery support.

Northwest Kansas Community Emergency Response team welcomes all members of the community who are interested in helping serve those in need.

Volunteers are needed to join the CERT program. Stacy Kaup and Randy Nelson will be team leaders in Cheyenne county. Jordan Riley is the team leader for Sherman county, and David Becker is team leader for Thomas county.

If you would like to join, or are interested in additional information, please contact Stacy at the Cheyenne County Emergency Management office, 785-332-2560, or email her at daskaup@gmail.com. She will be more than happy to assist you and/or put you in contact with one of the leaders.



WORKERS CONTINUE at a frantic pace to complete the B&W building on Highway 36.

Herald photo by Tim Burr

Beware of fraudulent telephone calls

By Amanda Miller
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As I was busy typing up the latest article for this week about a "one-ring scam" going on, a curious thing happened. I received a phone call from a number I did not recognize.

I have heard a few warnings about these "fake number" phone calls, or collect phone calls, and heeded warnings not to answer.

The Better Business Bureau has put out several warnings over the last month about scammers that are hitting the phones. Here are some things consumers will want to know if they receive a phone call from an unrecognizable number:

The Better Business Bureau recently issued a fraud alert for the "one ring scam" after being contacted by people all across the country. This is how it works. The scammers use automatic dialers to

randomly call phone numbers. After the first ring, they disconnect. They hope you'll see that number in your missed call log and be curious enough to return it.

If you do return that call, you might be sorry.

The caller is connected to an expensive international hotline that charges as much as \$19.95 as soon as you connect. There may also be a sizable per-minute fee.

Some area codes of the scammers include Antigua (268), British Virgin Islands (284), Dominican Republic (809), Grenada (473), Jamaica (876) and Turks & Caicos Islands (649).

Always stop and think before you return any unknown call. You can Google the number, to check the area code, and see if there are any scam reports.

The phone call I received was from an area code of (855). After doing a search, I found multiple complaints of a phony debt col-

lection scheme.

According to information received by Better Business Bureau, calls from this number are from "National Fraud and Investigation Agency." They accuse consumers of defaulting on payday loans and threaten that if consumers don't pay immediately via wire or by providing bank account or credit card numbers, he or she will be arrested or sued.

At the City Council meeting, police chief Shane Guggenmos warned that in Nebraska there have been scammers calling stating that they must pay past due utility bills. These bills are not real, but the victim believes that they may have missed a payment, and gives over account information to pay it. Always double check with your utility services before paying anything over the phone.

Scammers may have consumer's Social Security, old bank ac-

count numbers, or driver's license numbers, as well as home addresses, employer information, or even the names of personal friends and professional references to make it seem that the threats are legitimate.

The Better Business Bureau offers the following advice to consumers if they receive a suspicious telephone call about an outstanding debt:

- Ask the debt collector to provide official documentation which substantiates the debt.

- Do not provide or confirm any bank account, credit card, or other personal information over the phone until you have confirmed the legitimacy of the call.

- File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission online if the caller is abusive, uses threats, or otherwise violates federal telemarketing laws.

Woman receives a huge dinner surprise

"Surprise!" is exactly what Joy Anderegg felt as she entered Big Ed's the evening of Jan. 11. She was expecting to be treated to a birthday dinner by her daughter Sheila and her husband Terry Hilt, of St. Francis, but what was in store was an even bigger treat. Joy was greeted at Big Ed's by her five children, 10 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren for a surprise birthday party. Joy and her family enjoyed steaks, laughs, and stories. They ended the evening with raspberry cake, hugs, and precious memories. Joy feels spending time with her family was the best birthday present she could have received.

In attendance: Harold and Christy

Tygart of St. Francis; Larry and Cathy Tygart, Chris and Mary Glascock of Denver; Sheila and Terry Hilt of St. Francis; Dana Clendenin of Bird City; Rachel Tracy and her friend Chris of Denver; Derek Vella, his wife Jocelyn and their daughters Madison and Avery of Greeley, Colo.; Aaron Tygart of Dallas, Texas; Alé Lorimer and her husband Eric of Shawnee; Danielle Waite of Denver; Adam Tygart and his wife Nicole of Manhattan; Andy Waite, his fiance Betty and their son Anderegg of St. Francis; Killy Lampe and her daughter Billeigh of St. Francis; and Matthew Tygart and his friend Melanie of Dallas.

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