



Commissioners discuss merging services

By Karen Krien

karen.k@nwksans.com

Cheyenne County Commissioners met with Sherman County Commissioners late Thursday afternoon at the courthouse in St. Francis. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the possibility of merging the two county's emergency medical services. No decisions were made, but there was plenty of discussion with the meeting ending on the agreement to meet in Goodland in the very near future.

What was intended to be an informational meeting turned into an emotional and angry two hours, as some of the Cheyenne County's emergency medical technicians were unhappy with the turn of events, mostly, it appeared, because of the lack of communication.

Government regulations, said Dale Patton, Cheyenne County Commissioner, are making it more and more difficult for small, rural counties to provide services. We feel we will need to collaborate to make our emergency medical service work, and to keep the quality service for our residents.

At the Jan. 28 meeting, Duane Wright, Sherman County Emergency Medical Service director, Ryan Murray, Cheyenne county emergency manager, and Dr. Mary Beth Miller, county emergency director, met with the commissioners for 40 minutes of executive session. Following the executive session, they discussed the possibilities of merging with Sherman County.

The following day, Janelle

Bowers, Cheyenne County Emergency Medical Service director, posted in an e-mail that she was resigning.

We must have an interim director, Mr. Patton said.

Some of the technicians felt like there had not been adequate communication. Concerning Mrs. Bowers, they asked if the commissioners had given her an ultimatum to either quit or be asked to quit?

"No," Mr. Patton said. "We - I was blindsided."

Mr. Murray said he had an e-mail from Mrs. Bowers a week prior to the meeting where she had written that she planned to resign.

Several years ago, Sherman County had problems with their emergency medical service. They had hired Mr. Wright, a Cheyenne graduate, to take over the management, and also hired a bookkeeper.

Now, with their service up and going, they are willing to share their knowledge, protocols and personnel, including the director and bookkeeper. At the same time, Cheyenne County service would keep its identity.

Mr. Klemm said, in the end, there are three goals that should be met: 1) provide high quality service; 2) make sure it is cost effective for taxpayers; and 3) see to those who are making a living at this.

By January 1, 2015, Cheyenne County emergency medical service will need to have electronic charting implemented. That means equipment must be purchased and technicians trained.

The commissioners were unaware of this newest



SHERMAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS met with Cheyenne County Commissioners on Thursday to discuss merging emergency medical services. Pictured are (l to r)

Steve Evert, Ken Klemm, Sherman County, and Dale Patton, Cheyenne County Commissioner.

Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

requirement. Sherman County is already using electronic charting. Following the discussion, Mr. Murray, who would distribute

them to the technicians. A second meeting for discussing the merger will be held in the very near future. Before the meeting, county technicians were urged to come up with a plan.

Local businessman suggests plans to make St. Francis 'a destination'

By Amanda Miller

amiller@nwksans.com

Local businessman Brett Poling is trying to "rev up" some ideas for making Saint Francis a destination, rather than a drive-thru, for travelers. And his newest idea just might bring a crowd.

Dr. Poling is trying to generate interest in having a motorcycle museum in St. Francis. Mike Bahnmaier, Dr. Poling's biological dad, has offered up to 30 museum-quality motorcycles. These bikes are rare and highly collectable, and the they would be impressive. Mr. Bahnmaier has already committed to sending those bikes to St. Francis.

"I really think this could get people off the highway, and bring them downtown," Dr. Poling said.

The idea comes from the Kansas Motor-

cycle Museum located in Marquette, Kansas. Mr. Bahnmaier has 35 motorcycles in this museum. With the addition of his collection, the museum has been very successful.

Like St. Francis, Marquette was a small town looking for visitors. With the museum, the small town now has over 10,000 visitors from all over the country. They also hold the "Thunder on the Smoky" motorcycle rally which brings in about 5,000 people once a year.

"Before I went there, I wasn't really a fan. But after visiting I thought it was really neat!" Dr. Poling said.

Dr. Poling visited with the City Council at the most recent meeting to brainstorm and see if there would be any interest. He also plans on mentioning it at the next County Commissioner's meeting.

The museum would function as a non-profit. It would not operate off taxes from the city or county, but instead be a non-profit that funds and runs itself.

The hope is to bring business to town. Dr. Poling said as a County Commissioner, he has seen sales tax revenues fall when the grocery store was slower, and he wants to keep the community thriving.

Mayor Scott Schultz suggested that Dr. Poling find out if there is an interest there, and if so get a committee together. That group could then look at finding and refurbishing a building, or building one if they so desired.

People interested in bringing a motorcycle museum to St. Francis should contact Dr. Poling for more information.

Irish Craic comes to St. Francis

Don't miss another "Irish Craic" happening at the Cheyenne Center for Creativity at 2 p.m. on March 16. Mike and Ione Slattery will be returning to St. Francis with a new program of Irish songs that will take you through a gamut of emotions including love, heartache, and humor.

There will be an electronic display of photographs from their 2013 travels through the beautiful Emerald Isle of Ireland. This program will also include some historical insights and stories related to the family ancestry research of Mike's Irish roots.

Ione Cram Slattery is from St. Francis, and taught music in the Hays public schools for 18 years. Mike is originally from Wright, and was a teacher and coach in the St. Francis public schools from 1973-1976. Mike was a professor of education at Fort Hays State University for 22 years. The Slatterys currently live in Hays.

Everyone is urged to come join the Slatterys at the Cheyenne Center for Creativity on March 16, and share in "Irish Craic II" with a "wee bit" of Irish culture wrapped up in photographs, stories, and songs of Irish love, laughter, and tears.



ENJOYING ENTERTAINING are Mike and Ione Slattery. They will be performing at the Cheyenne Center for Creativity at 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 16.



CITY LIGHT POLES are getting a fresh coat of paint. Keith Peter took advantage of the warm weather to paint the poles which were faded. Herald photo by Karen Krien