

# Emergency medical techs meet with commissioners

By Karen Krien

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Reid Raile is the spokesman for several of the emergency medical technicians which met with the county commissioners on Friday. His first comment concerned the statement made in *The Herald* and *Times* last week which said that some of the technicians were angry and emotional. What matters, Mr. Raile said, is we have a group of volunteers who are passionate and caring. The technicians, Mr. Raile said, met with Ryan Murray, county emergency manager, following a meeting where technicians met county commissioners as well as the Sherman County Commissioners and the Sherman County's emergency medical director. The meeting was called to discuss combining some of the emergency medical services. At the meeting, it was also announced that Jannelle Bowers, county emergency

medical director, had resigned but, as of the Friday meeting, no official resignation had been received. Today, Mr. Raile said, we have come with a unified voice. We support there being an interim director for 6 months but, long term, we want a local director. We are not in favor of a merger with Sherman County, however, he said, in the future, we would consider this arrangement. The technicians would like to recruit registered nurses who could help with transfers. There are several, Mr. Raile said, who have said they would help. Concerning transfers and the hospital, he said, we need to work together. When an ambulance crew can't be lined up for a run, it is a delay of time. We need to provide a single point of contact to arrange transfers, whether it is local technicians, from Wray or Goodland. The local emergency service will need to outsource the billing, as we don't have anyone on staff that can do it. We don't have anything against having Goodland do the billing but we feel the job needs to be bid out. Quality assurance is important to us, he said. There are a few people at the hospital who know quality assurance but there is also our technician, Erika Zimbelman, who knows the process and has agreed to do it. There is the on-call schedule and state requirements to deal with. The state wants the county covered at all times, so we will merge the Bird City and St. Francis services. We will have two technicians on call at all times. Electronic charting was one of the issues that Duane Wright, Sherman County's emergency medical service director, said need to be implemented and in use by Jan 1. Mr. Raile said he had investigated and there are no definite state deadlines for implementing the electronic charting. However, the technicians want to pursue electronic charting. Mr. Wright had sent the protocols used by Sherman County. At a prior meeting, he felt that the protocols used by Cheyenne County were not what they should be. Mr. Raile

and other technicians had reviewed them and had some concerns. They will further study the protocols. Mr. Raile has assumed the duty as liaison between emergency medical technicians, the community, commissioners and medical director. Now, he said, we need a leader. We don't know when Jannelle is stepping down and when Duane (Wright) will be here. We were wondering if Ryan (Murray) will be an acting director during this slice of time. Mr. Murray was later appointed as the interim director. With an interim director and, if Duane will be a consultant, it would buy us time until we get someone in as the director, Mr. Raile said. "Our goal is to provide the highest quality of care to the citizens of Cheyenne County," Mr. Raile said. They will recruit and retain emergency medical technicians, which will lead to sustainability. Mr. Raile asked about one of the sheriff's vehicles that will be available when they are replaced with new ones. It would be better to send a pickup instead of sending two ambulances to a scene. It also doesn't tie up two ambulances in case one is needed elsewhere. I don't like the word merger, said Dale Patton, commissioner chairman. It makes people feel unimportant. Transition is a better word. "I want Cheyenne County to be Cheyenne County," he said. "We need to maintain our own identity." Brett Poling, commissioner, along with Mr. Patton, expressed their appreciation to the technicians and told them they were always willing to talk to them. We want to be proactive, Mr. Patton said. Possibly hire two paid technicians. If we don't have the continuity, then things just don't flow. Mr. Patton said he planned to continue the commissioners' talks with the Sherman County Commissioners. He also encouraged the emergency medical technicians to attend. The Sherman County Commissioners met on Tuesday and Mr. Patton, as well as some of the other commissioners, planned to attend.



**THE UPCOMING MURDER TRIAL** required the county to build an additional juror seating section to provide seating for alternate jury members.  
*Herald staff photo by Amanda Miller*

## Hospital to offer bone density scanning

By Karen Krien  
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Cheyenne County Hospital staff and board members met with the county commissioners at their Friday meeting for their monthly meeting. Speaking for the group was Judy Rockwood, administrator and director of nurses. Ms. Rockwood reported that the number of patients using the hospital in February was up compared to last February's numbers. There were 2,823

outpatients, 31 patients in the hospital, 60 people using the emergency room, and 619 people using the clinic. There were 17 surgeries, and 100 people using the specialty clinics. The clinic numbers, Ms. Rockwood said, were probably up due to the flu. The hospital still needs a full-time night registered nurse, as well as a clinic assistant work clerk and a clinic supervisor. The Dexiscan machine (used for reading bone density) has

been installed. Darrell Reed, lab technician, had secured the equipment for a good price - much below the average price. Mr. Reed also talked about the new blood analyzer. He said they had replaced a valve on the machine two times. He had been told it was due to the hard water. The lab is in the process of buying a water softener for the cold water. Ms. Rockwood said grants are being written by Carol Sloper. Hospital staff members are also writing for a grant from Walmart.

She told about some of the things Great Plains Health Alliance, the company which leases the hospital, provides: 1) provides a regional vice president who has experience in all aspects of Rural Health Care; and 2) provides leadership and administrative oversight of the hospital operations. The facility meets all Medicare conditions of participation to be deemed a Critical Access Hospital, Ms. Rockwood said. The requirements include the following:  
• Have a maximum of 25 acute or swing beds.  
• Maintain annual average length of stay of 96 hours or less for acute care patients (there is no length of stay limit for swing bed patients).  
• Provide 24-hour emergency services, with medical staff on site, or on call and available on site within 30 minutes. Those present with the administrator were Mr. Reed, Shara Johnson, Heidi Tice, Roxie Neitzel and Shawna Blanka.

## Obituaries

### Martha Marie Zwegardt *Jan 1, 1930 - March 12, 2014*

Martha Marie Zwegardt was born Jan. 1, 1930. She was the eighth child of thirteen born to Wilhelm and Martha Elizabeth (Hofman) Zwegardt. In her youth, Martha was baptized and confirmed at Salem Lutheran Church. She went to country school and graduated the eighth grade. On April 16, 1950, she was married to Raymond Zwegardt. To this union three daughters were born: Jean Ann, Barbara Kay, and Shirley Dianne. Martha was a hard-working farm wife and spent many hours helping Raymond with the farm work and teaching her daughters how to cook and bake. Her family always came first, but she was also very devoted to the church. She spent many years teaching Sunday School and Bible School at Salem Lutheran Church. Martha was an alto for the church choir for many years. She was also very active in the American Lutheran Church Women, and held various offices over the years. She was a willing worker and volunteered many hours to the work of the women's organization. Martha's biggest joy was the birth of her four grandchildren: Christie Holzwarth, Jon Zwegardt, Brian Holzwarth and Kyle Buffington. Martha spent many hours babysitting them and loved having them all come out to the farm. The grandchildren all benefited from grandma's excellent cooking and baking skills, and never left the farm hungry or for the lack of lots of love. As the grandchildren grew up

and became active in school sports, Martha and Raymond were always in the stands cheering them on, whether they were playing in town or traveled out of town. When Christie played college volleyball, they followed her to Great Bend and several other towns. Jon began playing football, so they traveled to Garden City, Phoenix, Ariz. for the Valley of Sun Bowl, and on to Springfield, Mo. She loved all her grandchildren, and was so very proud of all of them and their accomplishments. Martha was also blessed with four great-grandchildren: Raegan Foster, Cooper Buffington, and Jackson and Justin Foster. By this time, Martha had begun her journey with Alzheimer's disease. But deep inside, we always knew that she was aware of who these precious children were, and greatly enjoyed all the visits she had with them in the nursing home. Martha was very fortunate to spend the last four years as a resident of the Good Samaritan Society, Sherman County. She received the best care possible, and became the delight to many of the

staff that cared for her. They truly honored her life until the very end. Martha was preceded in death by her parents, Wilhelm and Martha Zwegardt; sisters Clara, Mildred, and Alice; brothers Alvin, Martin, and Eldon; her husband Raymond Zwegardt; and her in-laws, B.L. and Emma Zwegardt. She leaves to mourn her daughters; Jean and husband Brice Buffington, Barbara and husband Randy Holzwarth, and Shirley Zwegardt, all of St. Francis; her grandchildren; Christie and husband Brian Foster, Raegan, Jackson and Justin of Manhattan; Jon and wife Kate Zwegardt of Windsor, Colo.; Brian and wife Danielle Holzwarth of St. Francis; and Kyle and wife Ashley and Cooper Buffington of St. Francis. Martha also leaves brothers Victor and wife Darlene Zwegardt; Harvey and wife Phyllis Zwegardt of St. Francis; Norman and wife Donna Zwegardt of Peoria, Ariz.; and William and wife Charlotte Zwegardt of Sterling, Colo.; and sisters Lenora Zeilinger of Phoenix, Ariz.; and Sylvia Queen of St. Francis; along with many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

### Kenneth L. Deardoff *Dec. 21, 1927-Feb. 26, 2014*

Former St. Francis resident Kenneth L. Deardoff died from complications of pneumonia on Feb. 26, 2014. He grew up and graduated from St. Francis Community High School. His parents were Chole and O.L. Deardorff.

He had three sisters; Darlene (Price), Donna (Smith), Kay (Tice), and one brother Wink. He is survived by wife, Delores; daughter, Jean; sons, Roger and Don, and grandchildren Michael, Hillary, and Chad.

## Wray Community Health Fair

**Blood Draw Dates: Wray Hospital:** Weekdays March 24-April 11 from 6 - 9 a.m.  
**The Cornerstone (Idalia):** April 14th and 16th from 7 - 9 a.m.  
May take normal medications prior to test  
Fast for 12 hours (but **DRINK** plenty of water!)

Cost: \$30.00 - Chem Panel (glucose, blood count, electrolytes, thyroid & more)  
\$15.00 - PSA (prostate blood test for men)

**Call for a Blood Draw appointment: (970) 332-4811**  
**(Appointments Highly Encouraged)**

**Health Fair Date**  
Saturday, April 19, at the Wray Schools  
Kitzmiller Building - 8 to 11 a.m.

Call for any questions 970-332-2245  
Jennifer Kramer, RN; Karen Keller, RN; Jeannie Neubauer, RN; Rachel Cure, ACSM, CES  
Sponsored by: The Wray Community District Hospital, Wray Clinic, & Wray Lions Club

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