



Fourth enjoyed by young, old



FIREWORKS BLOOMED OVER ST. FRANCIS on Friday, July 4, after a day packed full of activities including a parade, hamburger and hot dog fundraiser luncheon for Cheyenne County 4-H Deadeye Archery Club, games, and sand volleyball competition. **MADISON SIEGFRIED** (right) proudly displays red white and blue on her bike during the parade on Saturday morning.

Herald staff photos by Douglas Sloper



HANNA BRACELIN, part of the Bracelin Farms crew, pulls the grain cart alongside a truck as wheat harvest continues in full swing throughout Cheyenne County and surrounding areas.

Herald staff photo by Tim Burr

Wheat harvest reported in full swing

By Tim Burr

tburr@nwkans.com

The 2014 wheat harvest has been underway for just over a week. Harvest reports from the four county grain dealers indicate that the harvest is progressing, but with differing results from different areas of the county.

The Wheeler area usually gets its harvest started and in full swing earlier than the rest of the county. "This year, the early drought and then the large area of hail really hurt our producers, especially those south of highway 36 to the county line, and then west to the state line," said Dale Weeks, Wheeler Equity manager. "We've had a few good days, but

nothing like some of the big days in past years. I expect we will be winding down soon." The Bartlett elevator in St. Francis reported that harvest was progressing. The quality of the wheat they had received was excellent, but yields were down, just as they had expected.

Ray Magnani with Frontier Ag in Bird City reported that, although they had been receiving grain for a week, Monday was their first "harvest type" day. "We've been steady" he said, "but we have had to wait on green wheat to ripen. Just like everyone else, we have been hurt with hail and drought. We are expecting that the better wheat is yet to

come. We believe there is a lot of wheat left."

Shirley Zwegardt with the St. Francis Equity said that it was difficult to tell how much progress was being made with the harvest. "Usually you can tell if you are a third, or half done, or at least have a good estimate. This year, it's really hard to tell." Shirley reported that they have had some good days of receipts, but not any pressing big days.

All of the grain dealers reported good to excellent quality grain, with exceptional test weights. What yields that had been discussed were low, which was expected. "I think all of us knew this wasn't going to be a

big harvest, but we are looking forward to getting the rest of the wheat in the bin," said Doug Ross, St. Francis Equity manager.

Along with some bad and really bad fields, there appear to be some possibly good fields, especially located in the north-west part of the county. At the time of this writing, these fields are just beginning to be cut, so the results are yet to be determined. Those who have witnessed the wheat harvest in Cheyenne county before usually can rate how good a harvest is by the line of trucks waiting at the grain elevators to unload. All of the grain dealers this year stated "no lines, no waiting, come right on in".

Hospital board looks at different management firm

Amanda Miller

amiller@nwkans.com

Fulfilling requirements set forth by the county commissioners, the Cheyenne County Hospital Board held a special meeting on Monday to hear from New Light Healthcare, a management company from Texas. Hospital employees from nearly every department were present to listen to the presentation, and ask questions of the management company.

The hospital board is in the process of reviewing potential management and leasing companies for the hospital. The county commissioners requested that the board compare it's current leasing company, Great Plains Health Alliance, to some competitors. The commissioners want to be sure the hospital is receiving the best service at the best possible price for the county residents.

Since this process began earlier this year, it has been met with some resistance from hospital employees. Many have voiced concerns over the possibility of a turn over and what that would mean for the employees. Some of the concerns include the benefits employees currently have, the contracts that Great Plains Health Alliance currently has for the hospital with supply companies, insurance companies and Medicaid, and also the ability for the potential management candidates to provide the same training, support and education that Great Plains provides. These are just some of the concerns that have been brought up by employees in the meetings.

Monday afternoon, New Light Healthcare began by reviewing the financial information from the

past three years that they received from Cheyenne County Hospital. Todd Biederman, President and Chief Executive Officer, and Lee Hughes, Regional Vice President, began by stating the hospital has some strong points. They also said they saw areas that they felt their company could help improve.

New Light Healthcare spoke for about ten minutes before the hospital board called an executive session. The board cited the Open Meetings Act closed session reason as: "There were confidential data relating to financial affairs or trade secrets of corporations, partnerships, trusts or individual proprietorships."

The board went into executive session with the New Light Healthcare representatives at approximately 1:10 p.m., and came out of executive session at 2:10 p.m. Hospital employees were waiting in the hallway to continue the meeting once it went back into open session.

Board member Jane Young told the hospital employees that Mr. Biederman and Mr. Hughes were available to answer questions at that point. Mila Bandel, County Health Nurse, began the discussion by asking what the company could bring that would benefit the employees and the hospital.

Mr. Hughes explained that the purpose of New Light Healthcare was to make Cheyenne County Hospital as healthy as possible. He said that the revenue trends are going in the wrong direction, and he thinks his company can help turn that around. He then asked Mrs. Bandel what she, and other employees, were getting from Great Plains Health Alliance that was working and that they

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