

16 Pages

Thursday, December 4, 2003

119th Year, Number 49

Ambulance write-offs still a concern

By Karen Krien **Doctor says** patient is the first concern

The Cheyenne County Commissioners heard the other side of the ambulance write-off issue and, af- Nov. 26 meeting that he thought ter all the discussion, said they had Janelle Bowers, ambulance booknow heard both the doctor's con- keeper and billing person, was docerns and the ambulance director's ing a good job and it was his recomcomments and would make a deci- mendation that the commissioners sion on who would submit ambulance claims at a future meeting.

Ambulance director, reported at the money in.

"show heart" by letting her continue to do the job that they (the commis-Larry Gabel, Cheyenne County sioners) had already invested

Dr. Mary Beth Miller was also She had met with the ambulance di-suffered severe back problems and present at the meeting, following up from the last meeting at which she was also present. Dr. Miller's concern began when three patients came to her with ambulance bills which had been denied by insurance or Medicare because they deemed them as "not a medical necessity."

rector and bookkeeper to see how could not be transported in a vehicle. these bills had been submitted.

"I never send a patient by ambulance unless it is a medical necessity," she said.

One of the bills denied was submitted that the patient had a broken and the doctor felt that there should wrist but, in reality, the patient also

Another bill was submitted as a patient with hip pain but he had a severe hip problem. Both needed ambulance transportation.

There were other bills mentioned See WRITE-OFFS on Page 9A

Students' *program set for* Monday

The St. Francis Elementary music department students will present their annual Christmas program at 7 p.m. on Monday in the grade school gym. The program features kindergarden through fourth grade music students and will include a

wide variety of Christmas songs, solos, skits and choreographed dance numbers. "There will be many traditional

numbers as well as some new songs," said Jean Ann Confer, music instructor.

Themes include:

Kindergarten—"It's Christmas." First and second grade — "Here Comes Christmas.'

Third and fourth grade — "The Case of the Counterfeit Claus."

"The students have been working for several weeks on their program and are looking forward to the night of the performance," Mrs.

Confer said. The people in the

community are welcome and encouraged to attend. In addition to the 7 p.m. performance, a dress rehearsal will be held Monday morning at 10



DECORATING THE TREE (Valerie Wurm) during the Christmas program practice were Kyla Bandel, left, Echo Jones, right, and Ashlee Orth, kneeling. Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

Man dies from gas poisoning

By Karen Krien

A 61-year-old Goodland man died Sunday because of accidental release of carbon monoxide fumes.

Marlin Zimbelman was pronounced dead after a 911 call brought emergency medical technicans and ambulance service along with the Trenton Rural Fire Department and the Hitchcock County Sheriff to the trailer where he and his wife were staying. The trailer was located at Good Life Marina, 3 miles southwest of Trenton, Neb.

Mr. Zimbelman's wife Mary reported on Monday that Mr. Zimbelman had trouble with the furnace and she kept smelling gas fumes. They had gone to bed but about 4:30 a.m., she became alarmed with the smell and tried to get her husband to leave the house with her. He refused, saying that he couldn't smell anything.

She went to the pickup where she spent the rest of the night. The next morning about 7:30, she went back to the house where she found Mr. Zimbelman on the bathroom floor. The 911 call was made but Mr. Zimbelman was determined to be dead after authorities arrived.

The Hitchcock County Sheriff Department's news release reported that Mr. Zimbelman died from carbon monoxide poisoning because of improper venting of the LP gas furnace.

Mr. Zimbelman lived in Goodland with his wife. He was born and raised in Cheyenne County and graduated from St. Francis Community High School in 1960. His mother Martha Gilbraith lives in St. Francis.

Funeral services have been set for 11 a.m. on Thursday at the United Methodist Church in St. Francis. Burial will be in the St. Francis Cemetery.

St. Francis woman claims first instant \$50 scrip prize

ning number by Monday at 5 p.m.

By Karen Krien

St. Francis woman, Gladys Owens collected the first instant \$50 in scrip by matching her Christmas On Us ticket number with the number printed in *The Saint Francis* Herald and Bird City Times.

"It pays to stay at home and shop in St. Francis," Mrs. Owens said.

Her ticket came from Sainty Super Foods and she wasn't sure just where she was going to spend

Owens

On Tuesday, new numbers are chants will be advertising sales and drawn and inserted in the ads. The specials in the ads on the Christmas longer eligible to win. However, in looking for matching numbers, be the grand finale drawing on Dec. 21, sure to take a good look at the speall tickets will once again be eligible to win.

A total of \$400 in scrip will be tickets will be given away are:: given away to those holding the numbers which match those printed in the newspapers.

The grand prize Christmas On Us giveaway will be combined with the St. Francis Area Chamber of Commerce's giveaway on the afternoon of Dec. 21 in Sawhill Park. At that time, one lucky person will it but knew it was going to come in receive the grand prize of \$1,000 in handy during the Christmas season. scrip; another will receive \$100; and The Christmas On Us promotion

any of the \$50 weekly scrip prizes which have not been claimed will money during the holidays. Each also be given away along with the Chamber's drawings of \$300 divided among three people.

A ticket will be given for each \$10 purchased in participating busi- Paints Plus nesses. However, it is not necessary to make a purchase to claim a ticket. and the grand prize drawing will be *Times*. Those having tickets need to Each week, those coming to *The St.* held Sunday, Dec. 21. be sure and check out their numbers Francis Herald office or the Cham-

each week and claim the instant win- ber office may receive one ticket. Each week, participating mernumbers from last week are no On Us pages so while people are cials.

Participating businesses where

- Bankwest
- Bier's Hometown Store
- Cheyenne Bowl and Dairy King
- Cheyenne Pharmacy Plus
- Goodell Greenhouse and Floral
- Tim Poling DDS
- Owens True Value
- Parkhill Restaurant
- P & L Ideal Meat Market
- Sainty Super Foods
- Schultz's

• St. Francis Area Chamber of Commerce

- St. Francis Equity
- The Saint Francis Herald/Bird City Times
- Tri-State Lumber and Tubing/

The contest will end on Dec. 19



LOTS TO TELL — Alex, Sam and Kaily Schorzman had lots to talk to Santa about Friday evening. Alex and Sam are the children of Kevin and Angie Schorzman and Kaily is the daughter of Keith Schorzman. Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

Christmas season officially opens with many events

By Karen Krien

will be giving out \$1,500 in scrip

week, at least two numbers taken

from tickets collected from partici-

pating business, are drawn and

printed in a Christmas On Us ad on

Pages 1, 2 and 3B of *The Saint*

Francis Herald and Bird City

The St. Francis Christmas season officially opened Friday evening with the Treasure Hunt, Light Parade, Santa, the Elf Train and some pretty cool temperatures.

Businesses were open later to accommodate shoppers and Santa's Hut, located at Midwest Energy, was packed with kids, parents and others stopping in to enjoy watching

friends who had come back for the year by popular demand! Thanksgiving holiday.

parade, was around, getting almost as much attention as Santa.

Before the Light Parade began, people were walking up and down men had the Elf Train running most Main Street with a red piece of paper showing their Treasure Hunt down Main Street, it was full of chilnumber. The Treasure Huntis an old dren. tradition in St. Francis but last year, the kids, eat popcorn, drink cocoa it was suggested that it be dropped. and visit with neighbors and old However, it was brought back this

Treasure Hunt numbers were in-The Grinch, who had been in the serted in the Nov. 27 issue of *The* Saint Francis Herald and a few extra were available at Santa's Hut.

> The St. Francis Volunteer Fireof the evening and each time it went

> The senior citizens hosted a soup supper at the senior center and sold See SEASON on Page 9A

Fun offered through season

The St. Francis Christmas sea- mittee has organized some events

of Commerce's Christmas Com- Christmas lists.

son is here and will continue un- which will thrill children, give til Christmas with the Treasure people an opportunity to win prizes Huntheld each Thursday. The St. and a chance to shop in St. Francis Francis Christmas activities will stores. Many of the merchants will end on Dec. 21 in Sawhill Park. be open later on Thursday evenings numbers that didn't match Friday The St. Francis Area Chamber so the working people can fill their night may find the match this

Treasure Hunt

Each Thursday at 5 p.m., new Treasure Hunt numbers will be posted in participating business windows. Those Treasure Hunt See FUN on Page 9A

–Public Notices-**Groundwater management** to hold public hearing

Published in The St. Francis Herald, St. Francis, Kansas, and The Bird City Times, Bird City, Kansas, Thursday, December 4, 2003. LEGAL NOTICE

Pursuant to K.S.A. 82a-1030, the board of directors of the Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4 will conduct on January 8, 2004 a public hearing in order to hear testimony regarding revisions to the 2004 operating budget. Secretary

Said revisions consist of incorporating all 2003 unexpended funds into the previously approved 2004 operating budget. The hearing will begin at 11:30 a.m central standard time at the groundwater management district offices, 1175 S. Range, Colby, Kansas. Copies of the proposed revised 2004 budget will be made available at the hearing site. Attest: Mitchell Baalman, GMD 4

Notice of lapsed mineral interest in Cheyenne county

Published in The St. Francis Herald, St. Francis, Kansas, Thursday, December 4, 2003 NOTICE OF LAPSED MINERAL

INTEREST

This is notice to Harriet Rushmore; Robert Rushmore, Jr.; Corinee H. Pendleton: Hubert L. Harrison: Manette Wideman; Ned W. Smull; and Neil H. Smull; their successors and assigns, that their rights in the St. Francis, Kansas 67756

have lapsed. This notice is given by: Schultz

Dusty Farmer Restaurant to be offered at sheriff's sale

Published in The St. Francis Herald, St. Francis, Kansas, Thursdays December 4, December 11 and December 18, 2003. (49-51). IN THE DISTRICT

COURT OF CHEYENNE COUNTY, KANSAS First National Bank, St. Francis, Kansas, Plaintiff

Case No. 03-C-25 Darrel L. Johnson and Kim L. Johnson d/b/a Empire Motel, Dusty Farmer Restaurant, and Tumbleweed Lounge; United States of America, acting through the Internal Revenue Service; State of Kansas. Department of Revenue; Board of County Commissioners of Cheyenne County, Kansas,

Defendants

PUBLIC NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE

By virtue of an Order of Sale issued to me out of the District Court of Cheyenne County, Kansas, in the above-entitled action. I will on the 30th day of December, 2003, at 10:00 o'clock A.M. C.T., of said day, at the front door of the Courthouse in the City of St. Francis, County of Cheyenne and the State of Kansas, offer at Public Sale and sell to the highest bidder for cash in hand, all the following-described real estate, to-wit:

A tract of land in the Northwest Quarter (NW1/4) of Section Twenty-seven (27), Township Three (3) South, Range Forty (40), West of the 6th P.M. more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at a point on the South right-of-way line of U.S. Highway 36 as constructed in 1933 A.D., which said point is mineral interest in Northwest Quarter (NW) of Section Twenty-one (21), Township Five (5) south, Range Forty (40) West of the 6th P.M. located in Cheyenne County, Kansas

Eddy P. Schultz and Sherry L. HC 1, Box 136

A tract of land in the Northwest

Quarter (NW1/4) of Section Twenty-seven (27), Township Three (3) South, Range Forty (40), West of the 6th P.M. and more particularly described as follows, to-wit: Beginning at a point where the East line of Scott Street of the City of St. Francis, Kansas, projected South would intersect the South right-of-way line of U.S. Highway No. 36 as now laid out and established across said Quarter Section, which said point is approximately One Thousand One Hundred Ten Feet (1,110') east from the West line of said Section Twenty-seven (27); thence Two Hundred Twenty Feet (220') south along said projection of the east line of Scott Street of the City of St. Francis, Kansas; thence East at right angles approximately One Hundred fifty-nine and threetenths feet (159.3'), but in any event to intersect the West line of a certain tract of land conveyed by John MacDonald and Chloe MacDonald, his wife, to Carroll D. Skalberg and wife by warranty deed dated the 10th day of October, 1959, and recorded in Book 47 at page 58 of the records of the Office of the Register of Deeds of Cheyenne County, Kansas, projected South; thence North along said West line of said tract conveyed by John MacDonald and Chloe MacDonald to Carroll D. Skalberg and wife projected South and along the West line of said tract to intersect the South right-of-way line of said U.S. Highway No. 36; thence Westward along the South right-of-way line of U.S. Highway No. 36 to the point of beginning. The above-described real estate and property is taken as the property of Darrel L. Johnson and Kim L. Johnson, defendants, as described by said Order of Sale to be sold and will be sold without Appraisement to satisfy said Order of Sale.

WRITE-OFFS

Continued from Page 1A

never be a complete ambulance write-off, noting that there was a difference between contractual write-offs where Medicare and/or Blue Cross, Blue Shield pay only a certain part of the bill, and those bills which are denied because of incorrect coding or information.

Commissioner Tim Raile asked the ambulance director if the billing process had gotten more complicated over the past year as, last year, the write-offs were \$31,472 and this year, write-offs were already up to \$55,000 and there is still time left in the year.

The commissioners, while concerned with the patients, noted that they are elected to spend the taxpayer's dollars in a responsible way. If they are approving writeoffs that could otherwise be collected if billed correctly, they are not spending the money responsibly.

Commissioner Ron Krien asked if the bookkeeper needed additional schooling which would help with the coding and billing?

Hospital administrator Les Lacy was at the last meeting and had offered the hospital bookkeeping staff do the billing for \$6 a run plus a onetime training fee of \$1,000.

Commissioner Raile said that two years ago, the ambulance director was in favor of having the billing done in Plainville, for \$12 a run and Mrs. Bowers was still employed with posting and other bookkeeping responsibilities.

Administrator Lacy said that the hospital staff works with insurance and Medicare coding and billing on a regular basis and, if there were questions, Dr. Miller was contacted before the billing was sent in. Dr. Miller said that if a medical claim was denied, she followed up with letters containing detailed information.

Director Gabel countered that he had just received a bill from the hospital for a service performed in the spring, indicating that the hospital's billing system might not be as good as presented.

Administrator Lacy said the staff tried to get the bills out in the most efficient way and that there wasn't a billing system that was flawless. He said that he did not want the ambulance bookkeeper to lose her job and the staff was willing to, and had already, helped her out with problem cases. He adamantly stated that he didn't think the billing should fall on Dr. Miller's shoulders as she was already busy.

He also said that the hospital was not interested in operating the ambulance service.

Others present to either show support for Mrs. Bowers or just to gain more information were: Beth Gabel, Connie Jenkins, Wendy Richmier, Tammi Sherlock and Rex Murray.

Mrs. Bowers began doing the

ambulance barn doing posting and other bookkeeping duties but the ambulance billing was sent to Diane Becker in Plainville. Unfortunately, after a time, not all the claims were turned in and Mrs. Bowers took over the billing. Director Gabel said Mrs. Bowers had gone to numerous trainings and he thought she was doing a good job.

Before Mrs. Bowers, there were two bookkeepers who had fallen behind in billing and, before that, the ambulance billing was done from the sheriff's office. This was 10 years ago and, since that time, there have been many changes in Medicare and insurance billing and coding

Dave Flemming, road and bridge supervisor, had an appointment with the commissioners but, since the ambulance write-off issue had lapsed over into his appointment time, he had listened to what had been said.

He asked Director Gabel why he even wanted the responsibility (billing) when there was someone wanting to take it over and it could save the county money. Mr. Gabel commented that he didn't believe the figures were right.

The commissioners will weigh the information taken from the meeting and past meetings, then make a decision on who will do the billing at a future meeting.

In other business

In other business:

· Sam Beeson, Bird City, wanted to know if Road Q between Roads 25 and 26 was an open or closed road. This stretch of road had been discussed previously and it recently had a "no hunting" sign posted in the middle. Everyone agreed that if it was an open road, it would remain open

• Tim Carson, Corporate Plan Management representative, discussed the county insurance, going over previous year's usage and gave recommendations for the future. No decision was made.

• Supervisor Flemming gave his monthly report and talked about one of the county's truck repairs.

• The commissioners approved 36 hours overtime for the undersheriff; approved a hospital pay application (for the remodeling project) of \$209,320; agreed to pay EBH and Associates, Goodland, \$5,101 for the remainder of the work done at the airport; approved to pay Western Prairie Resource Conservation and Development dues of \$250. However, the commissioners wanted more information on computer and printer prices.

• The full-time county employees will receive \$200 scrip Christmas bonus; part-time employees will receive \$100.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the commis- cash donations which have been sioners has been set for 8 a.m. on made but, all of this help is just a be-

Saint Francis Herald 9A Thursday, December 4, 2003



REVA POWNELL, Food Pantry coordinator, helps fill Thanksgiving boxes to be given away.

Holidays are here! Support is needed

Bv Karen Krien

Over 55 food baskets were delivers so needy family could enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner. The baskets included a turkey or ham, potatoes, rolls, eggs, canned vegetables, fruit, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, pumpkin, evaporated milk or pie filling, pie crust mix, Jello, pudding, stuffing mix and some ingredients for several other meals.

"All boxes were filled depending on items we had on hand at the Pantry and the size and needs of the family," said Reva Pownell, Food Pantry coordinator.

"The food boxes were delivered to very appreciative families that we felt could use a boost for the Thanksgiving holiday.

'All of the cash and food donations from various businesses, organizations, clubs, schools, youth groups, churches and individuals in both St. Francis and Bird City really helped and were appreciated. We also received some very willing volunteers to help us fill and deliver the boxes."

Now, the Food Pantry shelves are almost bare and it is just weeks before the Christmas food boxes will be delivered. A number of organizations and school classes have organized drives for the Food Pantry which will help immensely. There are also some

where cash donations can be left. This money is used for perishables such as meat (turkeys and hams during the holidays), milk, eggs, margarine and cheese.

There are many special needs during the holidays but nothing is as special as food on the table.

FUN

Continued from Page 1A

Thursday or one of the following Thursdays. Businesses are offering great prizes and many will be open to distribute them. (Those businesses not open will honor the prizes on the next business day when open.)

Santa

Santa will be in St. Francis from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. each Thursday evening. This Thursday, he will be at Super Foods. On Dec. 11, he will be at Video Kingdom and, on Dec. 18, at Owens True Value. Children will be able to visit with him, tell him their Christmas wishes and he will give each a candy cane.

Elf Train

The Elf Train, operated by the St. Francis volunteer firemen, will be running each Thursday evening, weather permitting.

Lighting Contest

Chamber Christmas Lighting Contest winners will each receive \$50 in scriptobe spent in St. Francis. Everyone with Christmas lights is automatically entered and houses will be judged on Sunday, Dec. 14, by last year's Lighting Contest winners. The winning homes will be featured in the next Saint Francis Herald. The contest divisions include: Religious, Most Lights/Decorations and Fantasy

1519.3 feet East of the West line of said Section; thence South 0 degrees 17' East 120 feet; thence in a Westerly direction, parallel to and 120 feet South of said South right-ofway line of said Highway No. 36 a distance of Two Hundred fifty feet (250'); thence North and parallel with the west line of said Section Twenty-seven (27) a distance of approximately One Hundred Twenty Feet (120') but in any event to intersect the South right-ofway line of said U.S. Highway 36: thence in an Easterly direction along said right-of-way to the place of beginning, subject to legally laid out roads, highways and easements of record; and

Eddie Dankenbring Sheriff of Cheyenne County, Kansas

Jerry D. Fairbanks **General Counsel** First National Bank 202 E. 11th - P.O. Box 570 Goodland, KS 67735 785-890-2000

Before that time, she worked at the at the courthouse.

ambulance billing about a year ago. Dec. 15 in the commissioners' room ginning. More is needed.



Continued from Page 1A

out of soup and cinnamon rolls. Next year, they said they are planning to serve many more people.

"The Chamber members, businessmen and others involved with the Christmas Opening had no idea that it would so well attended! It was great!" said Gloria Bracelin, Chamber secretary.

"We were thrilled with the participation and turnout of floats and people," said Dawn Lucas, Christ-

mas Committee member. Up and down the street and even into the next day, people were still talking about the Chamber's Christmas Opening and making plans for next year.

Mrs. Pownell said that the Bird City Ministerial Alliance will be delivering boxes to Bird City but there are still many boxes to be filled in the St. Francis and surrounding area.

Among the items needed are: canned vegetables and fruits, boxed meals such as Hamburger Helpers, condiments such as catsup, mustard, salad dressing, mayonnaise, jelly, peanut butter, rice, macaroni, spaghetti, juices, flour, sugar, soups the list just goes on and on. And, if no one comes to your door on a food drive, drop some off at the Pantry at the sheriff's office or call Mrs. Pownell at 785-332-3561 and she will pick up the items. There is also a Food Pantry fund at Sainty Super Food

Grand giveaway

The Christmas On Us celebration will be held on Sunday, Dec. 21, at Sawhill Park. Activities will include: a chili feed, Caroling Contest, Santa, the Elf Train and the drawing of three \$100 scrip prizes. The Chamber joins The Saint Francis Herald and participating businesses in the drawing of \$1,000 and \$100 in scrip.



"The guy in the red hat is the epitome of what it means to give. He gives, and gives, and gives. He takes nothing. Unless you count the milk and cookies. Which I don't" Santa strikes again



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