



Final meeting and vote are Tuesday

By Karen Krien

The vote to merge or not to merge will start at 5 p.m. on Tuesday at the fairgrounds in St. Francis.

This is one last meeting for questions and answers before members who are present vote on whether or not to merge with Frontier Equity in Goodland. Since the first meeting held Feb. 2, there has been one other meeting for St. Francis Equity members. There has also been some

people voicing concern that this may not be the best thing for the cooperative business or St. Francis.

Pete Gienger said he thought that by merging with Frontier, it would be like pounding another nail in the town's coffin.

There is also the question that why would St. Francis want to merge with a company which, two years ago, had a \$2 million loss?

However, Equity manager Tim

Burr said the company hired to study the Equity's financial state recommended a merger with a company similar to the Equity's business. The study indicated that Frontier Equity, based in Goodland with other locations in Brewster, Edson, Bird City and McDonald would be a good merger.

The vote to merge not only involves St. Francis Equity patrons but also those of Frontier Equity. Of

those patrons who show up to vote, there must be a majority of two-thirds to finalize the agreement. It is possible that Frontier Equity patrons may not want to absorb a business which is not financially sound. It is also true that some St. Francis Equity members feel that the business can survive.

Managers of the Wheeler Equity, Dale Weeks, and Bartlett's, Doug Ross, said they had no comment as

to how the merger of the Equity would affect them. An outside comment was made that competition is always good.

One of the selling points of the merger is that the St. Francis business will benefit by being able to participate in bulk purchases in fertilizer, petroleum and grain.

Dale Rath, Equity board member, when contacted, said he is opposed to the merger. He said that in two

years, the tubes (three new grain elevators) will be paid for. He would like to see the board, manager and members investigate other alternatives before jumping in with Frontier.

Manager Burr has said more than once that whatever the vote is, the board will go on from there.

"The important thing is to come to the meeting on Tuesday and vote," he said.

Hospital goes tobacco-free

By Karen Krien

By the end of March, the hospital and clinic campus will become tobacco-free.

Administrator Les Lacy said after that point, staff will not be able to use tobacco products while they are clocked in or on hospital property. He pointed out that while the tobacco ban was enforceable for employees, the hospital would have to rely on tobacco user's courtesy for nonemployees until the legislature makes smoking on hospital grounds illegal. He indicated that employees off the clock would be able to smoke in their cars. Kansas law currently prohibits smoking inside the hospital.

He talked about placing containers for cigarette/cigar butts at the corners of the hospital property. He said that after the hospital addition was completed, the staff had cleaned up the property and there were numerous cigarette butts and he thought it was better to provide a container than to have people dis-

card them on the lawn.

Remodeling and equipment

The remodeling of the physical therapy room in the basement of the hospital and the emergency entrance at the rear is supposed to begin on March 6. This date will mark the beginning of the 180-day count to the end of the project.

In the meantime, the handicap ramp at the front of the hospital has developed some rough spots which could be a tripping hazard. The hospital administrator said that Bill Wilger, hospital maintenance, has painted boards with a paint/sand mixture and, as soon as the weather warms up a little, he will glue the boards on.

The board wondered if it wouldn't be easier to replace the ramp but Administrator Lacy said that the front entrance would become the emergency entrance when the remodeling is started in the rear. There just would not be enough time.

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Remodeling job is tabled for now

By Sandy Barnhart

The remodeling of the city hall was again on the St. Francis City Council agenda when members met on Feb. 21. Again, the matter was tabled again.

A lengthy discussion took place on finishing the back room of the building. Previously the cost to finish the room was estimated around \$47,000. The council decided to wait until July where some of the finances could be budgeted into next year and they would know more about where the fire station/ambulance project was at.

They also requested that chief of police Troy Gardner ask the Cheyenne County Commissioners if they would consider helping with some of the funds since the majority of the county's sheriff activity is conducted in the city hall building.

Health insurance

In order to keep the city health insurance premium similar to the

previous year the council approved to increase the deductible.

The deductible will increase for: Single - \$200 to \$500; family - \$400 to \$1,000.

The council also discussed the option of a cafeteria plan for the employees. A cafeteria plan would allow each employee to determine how much of their wages they would like set aside for the year. The funds would be tax deductible and could be used for various reasons including eye glasses, medicine, babysitting, etc. The council tabled the discussion until further information could be found.

Old city hall building

Dorothy Smestead was present to ask about a lease to purchase the old city hall building. Mrs. Smestead and her husband Randy are interested in the building and garage, but at the present time would like to rent the building until their business is

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YEARBOOK STUDENTS, (l to r) Ally Reichert, Ashton Rueb and Schuyler Coates were among those participating at Regional Journalism contest in Hays.

Photo courtesy of the Yearbook class

Sainty students do well at Regionals

The St. Francis Community High School Journalism students traveled to Hays where they participated in the Regional Journalism contest. Of the 24 students attending, 22 will be participating in State competition on May 6.

"I am incredibly proud of the effort given by each student," said Brenda Day, Yearbook adviser.

"I know that everyone who competed is qualified to go. I am very happy for those that get the recognition."

Five of the seniors, Jade DeGood, Talisa Voorhies,



Hnizdil



Grace



Miller



Loyd

Schuyler Coates, Ashley Dowgwillo and McKenzie Grace plan to go into journalism, graphic design or broadcast. Mrs. Day said that through the Yearbook class, they have some exposure to the field.

McKenzie said she likes all of the aspects of journalism and yearbook including taking photos, designing and writing.

"As Yearbook editor, I have a lot of input into the Yearbook," she said. "I like the idea of making

something that is going to be around for a long time and people will be looking at our work."

McKenzie said she enjoys working with Mrs. Day.

"She (Mrs. Day) is a good teacher which is evident by how well we do at contests."

Placers

Those placing first were McKenzie Grace, Editing; Editorial Cartoon, Dara Loyd; News Writing, Grace Hnizdil; and Sheryl Miller, Newspaper Design.

Other winners were:

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'The only way for a cowboy to go to heaven,' he said



TIM BAXTER RODE to his final resting place in a horse-drawn hearse. He told his wife Judy that 'it was the only way for a cowboy to go to heaven.'

By Karen Krien

For the last seven months, people in St. Francis and Cheyenne County have been anxiously waiting for Tim Baxter to wake up and be the same smiling, happy guy everyone knew. However, on Friday, he took his last breath with family and friends surrounding him.

His wife Judy said the diagnoses was viral encephalitis but the results of the autopsy were not known.

Mr. Baxter came home from work on Aug. 9 and had a seizure. He was taken to the hospital in St. Francis and immediately flown to a hospital in Hays.

For the last seven months, Mr. Baxter has been hospitalized.

Mr. Baxter was well known as a welder, building many of the corrals on area farms. He also loved to hunt and fish which he was able to turn into an outfitting business.

He enjoyed building derby cars and Mrs. Baxter was the driver. They won many derbys.

They have two sons, Cody and Jessie. A complete obituary can be found in this issue on Page 5.