

Funding cuts lead to office closing in 2008

By Karen Krien

Four Natural Resources Conservation Service offices in northwest Kansas will be closed by 2008. Offices include Cheyenne, Decatur, Sheridan and Gove counties.

At a meeting with conservation districts on Aug. 24, Harold Klaege, state conservationist, said there was a \$2.6 million reduction in technical assistance funding that had to be dealt with by 2008. His plan called for cutting 48 of the staff and consolidating 48 of the field offices down to 23. He would also cut area offices from five to four.

Decatur County would consolidate with Rawlins County; Cheyenne with Sherman; Sheridan with Thomas and Gove with Logan

County. Lane and Wichita counties will merge with Scott County. These are just a few of the western Kansas county offices which will be required to merge.

A proposed map shows that about six office closing are in the eastern half of the state, the rest are in western Kansas and most of those counties are considered "farm-dependent."

Joan Gienger, Cheyenne County District Conservationist, said she didn't have any comments and said all questions should be referred to Mr. Klaege.

However, Randy Rueb, Conservation District Supervisor, said he had been told the state of Kansas had

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Council releases building bids

By Karen Krien

A group of contractors and businessmen gathered at the Cheyenne Theater in St. Francis for the emergency building materials bid opening on Aug. 24. Dale Weeks, city council member heading the project, opened the bids which were then given to Dan Hall, representing BG Consultant, the engineering company which drew up the plans for the building.

Only bids in sealed envelopes and complete bids were taken. Mary Lampe, city clerk, noted that some bids had come over the fax and other bids were not complete.

"These bids were not consid-

ered," she said.

When the bids were totaled, they were higher than the amount of money allotted by the Kan-Step grant. The grant pays for the materials up to \$291,060 but the labor is all volunteer.

The engineer then went through the bids and deleted the termite treatment, some equipment, finishes including floor coverings and kitchen equipment. The bids were once again added and they came to \$319,173. That was still more money than allotted. So, the St. Francis Fire Department put in \$3,500 and the city of St. Francis

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SEE WHAT I BUILT — Timmy Lambert had completed one of his first projects in Shirley Swihart's kindergarten class.

Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

Tour set for Sunday

Get ready to relive the Kidder Massacre when Kent Chapman, Emporia, speaks at the Bird City Library on Sunday. The program will begin at 1 p.m., then the group will head to the Kidder Massacre site where he will tell about the battle and some of the differences in the opinions of the massacre.

The historical event is sponsored by the Cheyenne County Historical Society.

More about the site

Col. Ray Sparks of Shawnee Mission, a noted historian and writer of the early Indian battles was the guest speaker when the historical markers were erected at the Kidder Massacre site. The site is located on Beaver Creek in northeast Sherman County just south of Bird City.

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Theft reported

By Melinda Basnett

Janelle Bowers, ambulance director, talked to the Bird City City Council on Monday about installing sensor lights in dark areas around the Eggers Emergency Building.

She said last week someone broke into the building not once but twice. The second time was during the day.

Items were taken from the ambulances included a Glucometer and case, needles, two tubes of glucose, and IV bag of saline flush, and a bag of saline fluid. Other things were left lying around the ambulance.

She said the security code was used to gain entrance and the code has been changed since then.

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Ambulance figures show hospital would lose money

By Karen Krien

The hospital administrator talked about the ambulance service when he met with the Cheyenne County Commissioners on Aug. 31. After presenting figures, he said that, at this time, it would not be in the best interest of anyone for the hospital to run the service. However, he will continue to study the issue.

Administrator Les Lacy said he had been

working with Janelle Bowers, ambulance director, to collect as much information as possible before making any decisions or recommendations.

He said that, based on the current reimbursement assumptions he has to make because of the existing Critical Access Hospital rules, the hospital could face losses of an additional \$50,000 beyond current ambulance losses.

The ambulance's financials are currently presented on a cash basis.

"The hospital would have to present financials on an accrual basis, which includes components such as depreciation, contractual adjustments and bad debt expense," he said. "If the ambulance continues to be operated by the county, a projection of the ambulances accrual financials would show an estimated

\$57,000 loss by Dec. 31."

Administrator Lacy was careful to point out that there are a number of rules and variables in the reimbursement that needed to be considered.

He said he would continue to watch the financials and continue to pursue a written interpretation of the CMS "35 mile" rule specific to the circumstances of Cheyenne County. He said that if the issues surround-

ing the "35 mile rule" could be overcome, the financial picture would improve markedly.

Mrs. Bowers told the commissioners that ambulance 11A had been breaking down and, when she took it to the dealer to be repaired, it was obvious there was a problem. She thought the problem had been fixed.

She asked for 15 minutes to discuss per-

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BIG EQUIPMENT is leveling the area in preparation for the apron (parking area) at the airport in St. Francis.

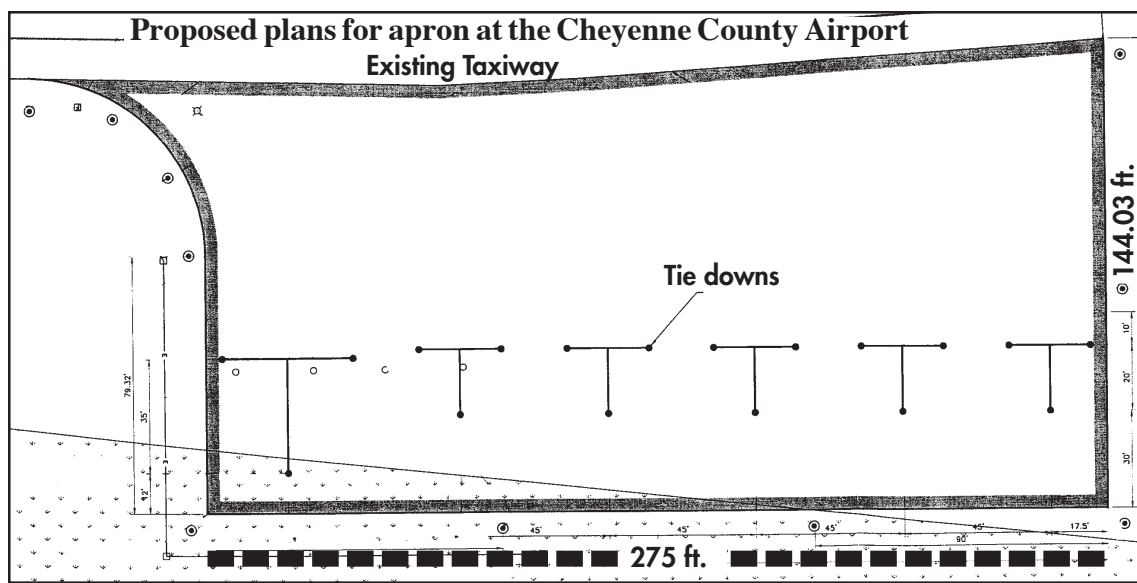
Work begins on airport apron

By Karen Krien

The Cheyenne County Airport continues to see improvements, thanks to matching grants through the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA).

The construction of the apron (parking area for planes) started on Tuesday when the dirt moving equipment arrived at the airport south of St. Francis. Dave Yost, member of the Cheyenne County Airport Authority, reported that a pre-construction meeting with Marek Kubesa of Olsson Associates, Englewood, Colo., the consulting firm hired by the Authority, was held Tuesday before the construction began.

Doing the work is Klotz Sand Company, Scott City, the low bidder for the project.



The apron will be approximately four times the size of the present apron. There will be six tie

downs for planes and Mr. Yost said it will be a much better parking area for planes coming in, es-

pecially the medical planes and ambulance staff transporting pa-

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Treasure Hunt begins next week

By Karen Krien

The Great U.S. 36 Treasure Hunt is coming on Sept. 15 through 17. All along U.S. 36 will be sales featuring antiques, collectibles, stuff and junk.

In Cheyenne County, both St. Francis and Bird City will be hosting garage sales. Maps have been made and copies will be available in several different places including the Cheyenne County Museum, Empire Motel, Hilltop General Store and Saint Francis Herald in St. Francis and on Bird Avenue as you come into Bird City.



There are 30 sites listed on the St. Francis map and 21 on the Bird City map. However, people do not have to be listed on the map to participate in the Treasure Hunt. The map does

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Beecher reunion set for Sept. 15-17

By Karen Krien

The 107 Beecher Island Reunion has been set for Sept. 15, 16 and 17 at the battle grounds located 22 miles west of St. Francis on U.S. 36 and then north 8.5 miles on Rd. LL.

Each year, the reunion draws hundreds of people. Some come for the history of the battle fought between Indians and about 50 civilian scouts led by Lieutenant Fred Beecher. Others come for the entertainment, food and the black powder shoot.

The entertainment will start at 7 p.m. on Friday for music with Highway 385. Early Saturday morning, breakfast will be served and the

black powder shoot starts at 9 a.m. There are games, a pedal tractor pull, turtle races and lunch. The Swinging Seniors will provide musical entertainment during the afternoon's fun which begins at 1 p.m. Saturday evening, Bob and Shelia Everhart will be entertaining at 7 p.m.

Pancakes will be served Sunday morning. The monument rededication ceremony will be held along with a flag ceremony at 9:40. There will be a 10 a.m. worship service with lunch following around noon. That afternoon, The Garage Boys

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