

County says software training 'inadequate'

From "TRAINING," Page 1

the load among the 20 counties in north-west Kansas included in the mental health district.

Hill said that state budget cuts to the tune of \$400,000 last year and another \$400,000 this year could send the agency into the red by next year.

When people need service, he said, it's hard to do when everyone in the chain doesn't do their part.

Carl Eymann of the Kansas Workers Risk Co-operative for Counties, which covers the county for employee injuries, told the commissioners the company had changed a "low-cost modifier" to give a break in workers' compensation rates this year.

Susan McMahan, the county's emergency management director, told the commissioners that Scott Hilbrink, a firefighter and volunteer emergency medical technician, has agreed to fill the unpaid position of county radiological officer.

McMahan received approval from the commissioners to hold a foreign animal disease school on Tuesday, an "awareness training" covering what to do in the event of an animal disease outbreak.

She told commissioners she had ordered \$526 worth of supplies to make identification cards for county elected officials, de-

partment heads, and all first responders. She said Thomas County is the only one in northwest Kansas that has the equipment to make the cards.

- In other business, the commissioners:
• Approved attending the Kansas Association of Counties "minimeeting" at 8:30 Wednesday morning and continuing through the afternoon at the Frahm Theatre on the campus of Colby Community College
• Received the monthly report from the Economic Development Alliance and the changes in the bylaws in reference to meeting notification.
• Approved minutes from the April 21 meeting.

Proposed soda tax fizzling in Kansas Legislature

From "TAX," Page 1

tax increases and therefore might as well address the needs of the poor, disabled and elderly.

GOP committee members did agree to add \$31 million, restoring some cuts in mental health programs, in-home services for

the disabled and other public assistance. Democrats didn't think the committee went far enough.

The proposed soda tax would raise \$90 million a year for those programs, schools and general government operations.

Legislative researchers say it would increase the cost of a

12-ounce can of soda by 10 cents; beverage industry officials claim a 2-liter bottle would cost 56 cents more.

Morris said the tax would amount to a levy of 30 percent to 50 percent, depending on the product.

The tax would apply to packaged sweetened, nonalcoholic beverages, including soda, root beer, ginger ale, lemon-lime

drinks and beverages that are 10 percent or less "natural" fruit or vegetable juice.

Only three states - Arkansas, Washington and West Virginia - have such a tax, said Dan Thorp, a spokesman for the American Beverage Association.

"It would be a logistical night-

mare," he said. But Thorp said the biggest concern is increasing costs for consumers - and a resulting drop in sales. Morris said about 14,000 jobs are tied to the industry in Kansas.

The industry is sponsoring full-page ads in eight Kansas newspapers and plans to broadcast radio ads across the state, Thorp said.

Golden Plains duo named league champs

From "DUO," Page 1

duet. Gilbert qualified earlier this year for her poetry.

The state tournament has three preliminary rounds, with the top competitors going into finals, where entries are ranked. At the festival, each competitor performs one time with a ranking of I, II, or III given on their performance, similar to music festivals.

Unable to attend the league meet was Avery Spresser.

"A big thank you goes out to Mary Luna and Rose Juenemann for going with us to Weskan for the day to assist in judging the per-

formances of all the competitors," said coach Cathy Broeckelman.

During the previous week, the forensics team competed at Oakley. Spresser and Gilbert competed in duet acting with "Cooking Chaos" for the first time together. Spresser and Jonathan Broeckelman competed together for the first time in improvised duet acting. In poetry, Isaac Broeckelman read the poem "The Walrus and the Carpenter" for the first time, while Gilbert read the poem "The Most Beautiful Flower."

The Broeckelmans also competed in duet acting, finishing fifth overall.

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