

Pay hikes could bring more help

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money for salaries next year.

“We’re going to try and convince the Legislature,” Dewell said, “that we are really having a problem hiring and retaining people because of salary.”

He said legislators ordered a study of the patrol in 1998, which showed the agency needed 93 more troopers across the state to provide adequate law enforcement.

Eichkorn said they have gotten about 16 more troopers since then, but 22 of the 105 counties in Kansas don’t have an officer at all. That includes Rawlins, Wallace, Sheridan, Greeley and Graham counties in this area.

In Sherman County, Dewell said, there should be five to six troopers, but now there are two — with another on a leave of absence for medical problems — trying to patrol 16 hours a day.

Two new troopers will be moving to Goodland, he said, once they graduate this month, but if one leaves it’ll be hard to find a replacement.

“We have 47 openings to fill in January,” Dewell said, “but we’ll only be able to fill 30 to 31. We’re behind right off the get go.”

Eichkorn said the patrol tried to hire 36 new troopers, but five backed out even before they went to the academy.

Lt. Kevin Winston, Highway Patrol supervisor in Goodland, said he’s having to put off some administrative duties to work road shifts. He said it all goes back to one central problem.

“The garbage men and the dog catchers in Sedgewick County (Wichita) make more than we do,” he said. “It’s bad to say, but it’s true.”

A survey comparing Kansas troopers’ starting salaries to other states and law enforcement agencies, shows Kansas is at the bottom, lagging \$300 to \$8,000 behind with a starting pay of \$26,016 a year. The starting salary in Colorado is \$34,326; in Missouri, \$31,512; in Nebraska, \$28,500; and in Oklahoma, \$26,460. The gap widens, Lt. Eichkorn said, the longer troopers are on the job.

Astarting Topeka policeman, Eichkorn said, will make \$300 more than a new Kansas trooper to begin with, but after five years will make \$3,000 more.

The problem has been around for awhile, he said, and isn’t going to go away soon. Eichkorn said the patrol stands to lose over 105 troopers to retirement in the next five years.

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4-h club news

Sunflower 4-H Club

The regular monthly meeting of the Sunflower 4-H Club was held at 7 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 20, at the United Methodist Church.

President Craig Mason called the meeting to order. Roll call was “What Are You Thankful For?” and was answered by 30 members, 15 parents, two leaders and three guests.

Samantha Raymer opened the meeting by leading the group in a song titled “Green Grass Grows All Around.”

The business meeting opened with Leader Diane Krayca informing the club that the fair dates for next year would be Aug. 6-11.

She handed out new program books and took orders for club T-shirts.

Leader Cris Riebel announced that



Dani Mangus, almost 3, hid behind her Harry Potter doll while her brother, Devin, 10, kneeled next to her Thursday at the Goodland Public Library. Photo by Dana Sulsberger/The Goodland Daily News

Kids have fun learning

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one, if not all of the Potter books. The look-alike contest was almost too close to call because all the kids were able to answer all the questions that Gillihan asked about the books, technical stuff like the name of the magic train station (the answer was “nine and three-quarters”).

Kids watched a planned explosion put on by Harold Gillihan, the librarian’s husband, who works for Peoples Natural Gas.

He pumped natural gas into a tube and set it on fire with an electrical spark.

Kids also watched as Michael Smith, a student volunteer, lit bubbles filled with propane and natural gas in mid-air. He stood there with a torch, setting them on fire.

The propane bubbles sank to the floor because they were more dense

public service announcements were scheduled for the month of January and a sign-up sheet was available for those who wanted to participate.

She also informed the group that the community service project was going to be the Genesis food drive which was scheduled for Dec. 2.

Following the food drive, the club will have its Christmas party at noon in the 4-H Building. They will eat pizza.

The Gold Gavel Club Membership was discussed and reinstated for the year.

There was no program. Forrest and Dillon Trachsel led the group in a “wild” tunnel race for recreation.

Refreshments were provided by the Holloway family.

Chelsie Gausman, reporter

Inhalant abuse can be lethal

Inhalant abuse...can kill, even the first time someone sniffs. This subject has been touched on a few times, but in speaking with a couple of parents it’s obvious that it isn’t something many parents want to believe is possible.

When we think about talking with our kids about drugs we may forget to mention inhalants.

But getting high by sniffing or huffing is very popular because it’s very cheap.

The most popular item being spray paint which can be found for as low as 99 cents.

Sniffing through the nose and huffing through the mouth is a very dangerous way to get this cheap “high”.

I would like to share some information provided by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The complete information comes in a pamphlet form and you may come by the Regional Prevention Center to pick it up or call and I will be more than glad to mail it to you.

Every year, young people in this country die of inhalant abuse. Hundreds also suffer severe consequences, including permanent brain damage, loss of muscle control and destruction of the heart, blood, kidney, liver and bone marrow.

Today more than 1,000 different products are commonly abused. The National Institute on Drug Abuse reported in 1996 that one in five American teenagers have used inhalants to get high.

Many youngsters say they began sniffing when they were in grade



cris lovington

• prevention center

school. They start because they feel these substances can’t hurt them, because of peer pressure or because of low self-esteem.

Once hooked, these victims find it a tough habit to break.

Sniffing can cause sickness and death. Victims may lose control of their body, including the use of their arms and legs. These effects can last 15 to 45 minutes after sniffing.

“Sudden Sniffing Death” can occur during or right after sniffing. The heart begins to overwork, beating rapidly but unevenly, which can lead to cardiac arrest.

Ordinary household products, which can be safely used for legitimate purposes, can be problematic in the hands of an inhalant abuser.

The following are only a few items which can and do get used for inhaling: marking pens, gasoline, aerosols, deodorants and whipping cream.

People who are inhalant abusers may have some or all of the following signs:

- Unusual breath odor or chemical odor on clothing.
- Slurred or disoriented speech.
- Drunk, dazed or dizzy appearance.
- Signs of paint or other products

loss of appetite.

• Chronic inhalant abusers may exhibit such symptoms as anxiety, excitability, irritability or restlessness.

They may also show signs in their behavior, such as sitting with a pen or marker near their nose; constantly smelling clothing sleeves; paint or marker stains on clothes, face or fingers; or hiding rags, clothes, or empty containers of the potentially abused products in closets and other places.

Note: There is no typical profile of an inhalant abuser. Victims are represented by both sexes and all socioeconomic groups throughout the United States.

It’s not unusual to see elementary and middle-school age youths involved with inhalant abuse.

One of the most important steps you can take is to talk with your children or other youngsters about not experimenting even a first time with inhalants.

In addition, talk with your children’s teachers, guidance counselors and coaches.

By discussing this problem openly and stressing the devastating consequences of inhalant abuse, you may help prevent a tragedy.

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In back

**KANSAS HIGHWAY PATROL
TO HOLD TOWN HALL MEETING**

**The Kansas Highway Patrol
is in the process of conducting
“Town Hall” meetings. Goodland’s is:**

December 5, 2000

7 p.m.

**4-H Building at the
Sherman County
Fairgrounds**

**Don’t miss this opportunity
to get to know your
Highway Patrol better!**