



Mike Brannick, the director of finance at Golden West Skills Center, helped a client, Wesley Strange, check his electronic mail account this morning in the center's new computer lab. Clients use the lab to write e-mail, surf the net and produce a newsletter.

Photo by Rachel Miscall/The Goodland Daily News

Center allows disabled to be independent

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The transition to community-based services was brought on by changes in state law, Bowman said, but it proved to be an excellent move for the facility and its residents. She said the Developmentally Disabled Reform Act the Kansas Legislature passed in 1996 forced many institutions around the state to shutdown. To avoid closing, Bowman said, the center followed the growing trend of allowing clients to live independently. "It's a state trend," she said. "It's a national trend. It's a good trend. It was a good move on the part of the state and on the part of Res-Care.

None of our individuals would go back to an institutional setting." Bowman said Goodland residents and businesses have supported the change, which she said is benefiting the community. Cheryl Cotter, director of quality assurance and case management at Golden West, said the center has added 40 consumers to the community, who are buying groceries, shopping, going to movies, eating at restaurants and working. Bowman added that the center has a staff of about 75 and an annual payroll of about \$1.5 million. "That goes right back into the community," she said. Some things haven't changed at Golden West.

The center wants to provide its clients with the best quality of life possible, Bowman said, and be as involved in the community as possible. In 1991, she said, the facility opened the Activities Based Learning Environment, or ABLE, center in a building on Main Avenue, just south of *The Goodland Daily News* office. Cotter, who has worked at Golden West since 1985, said it was a workshop setting, where clients did piece work for the puppet factory in Goodland, made doormats and other products and did work for the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce. The center also started a work enclave, Cotter said, gathering a group of people who cleaned businesses and did

other odd jobs. She said they wanted to have the ABLE center downtown for a reason. "We choose Main Street," she said, "because we wanted to be a part of the community." Bowman said when Golden West switched to community-based services, the staff moved the center back to the facility, which now had a ton of free space, but the work programs survived. "The ABLE center is here now," she said. Bowman said no matter what changes, the center's focus will always be its clients. "We want to help them be the best they can be," she said.

Anthrax strains from same batch

WASHINGTON (AP) — Anthrax strains discovered in Florida, New York and Washington are indistinguishable from one another, and have not been "weaponized," the government said today. A New York Post employee became the seventh person nationwide to contract the illness. "It does appear that it may have come from the same batch," Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge said of the spores that have spread disease to a small number and fears of broader bioterrorism to the country as a whole. "It may have been distributed to different individuals to infect and descend into different communities."

In New York City, health officials said the ill employee at the Post was being treated and doing well. A memo issued to others who work at the paper said it is "likely the employee may have been infected while opening the mail." As officials sought to allay public concern, police declared two Senate office buildings off-limits in order to check the spread of spores on Capitol Hill. "No member, staff member or congressional employee will be permitted to enter" the Dirksen or Hart Senate office buildings without personal protection gear," said a memo distributed by police. At a White House news conference, Ridge said that so far there are no test results to suggest the anthrax had been weaponized, meaning altered to make it spread more easily in the air. On a more sobering note, he said, "I wish I could tell you that we've seen the end of it, but we obviously are preparing for more. "That's why we've decided to increase the supply of the antibiotics and that's why we're pursuing every lead as aggressively as possible." Speaking from the same White House podium, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson said he was in the process of negotiating with the manufacturer of Cipro for reduced prices. Bayer Corp. is the maker of the pill, a front-line drug for the treatment of anthrax. One man has died and a second man remains ill in Florida after inhaling anthrax spores. Other cases of a less dangerous form of the disease have been traced to a letter mailed to NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw in New York. Another thirty-one people initially tested positive for exposure in Washington after the delivery of an anthrax-tainted letter to the office of Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle. Officials announced in the Capitol that after additional tests, three of the 31 have

been determined not to have been exposed. Sen. Bill Frist, addressing reporters in the Capitol, said officials will decide Sunday whether to reopen Senate office buildings Monday. "We have to wait that long because we don't have enough data," said the Tennessee Republican. In the meantime, the buildings have been declared a "warm zone," a declaration that a police spokesman said was routine in cases of testing for environmental hazards. The developments came as federal investigators struggled to trace the origin of a spate of anthrax-bearing letters, and administration officials said they still had no evidence of a connection between the bioterrorism and the Sept. 11 suicide hijackings that killed more than 5,000 people in New York and Washington. "I do not have knowledge of a direct link of the anthrax incidents to the enemy, but I wouldn't put it past them," President Bush said at a news conference in China. Six people had previously been diagnosed with anthrax in the past two weeks, including one at a New Jersey postal facility where tainted letters to Daschle and Brokaw were processed. Officials theorize the letter carrier, a woman whose name has not been made public, may have handled the envelopes at a West Trenton, N.J., post office facility. Officials also disclosed Thursday that the woman who opens CBS anchorman Dan Rather's mail had been infected with the treatable skin form of the disease. In the New York Post case, the city government memo, couched in reassuring terms, said the first symptoms appeared on Sept. 22, and that because no one else has shown any symptoms of the disease, it is unlikely that others will fall ill. Apart from the New Jersey letter carrier, officials said they believed that a maintenance worker who serviced mail-sorting machines at the Trenton post office's regional distribution center in Hamilton, N.J., has anthrax, the Postal Inspection Service reported. Another postal worker at the Hamilton facility was being tested for possible exposure to anthrax. The two employees were being treated and taking antibiotics, Acting Gov. Donald DiFrancesco said. Customers who visited the West Trenton post office in the past three weeks were urged to see a doctor if they had any symptoms of illness or a rash.

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