

Schools hope working together will help

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"We thought one of the most valuable things we can do at this point," he said, "is to gather school representatives from across the area and open a dialogue."

He said center staff thought districts could find ways to work together and perhaps share ideas.

"We thought there are things some schools are doing that might help other schools," he said, noting that he felt the meeting was a success because everyone walked away with new ideas.

Selby said Mark Tallman, lobbyist for the Kansas Association of School Boards, opened the meeting by talking about the problems state legislators are facing with a budget shortfall of \$698

million in the next fiscal year starting in July.

Lawmakers voted down increases in sales, income, estate and property taxes last week, Tallman said, and many would rather not raise taxes during an election year.

Without a tax increase, he said, lawmakers will have to make deep cuts in education, social services and highway projects. Tallman said it's important for school board members to talk with voters and legislators about not reducing state aid for schools.

Selby said representatives from every district said they may have to cut staff and programs to stay afloat.

"We're not as bad off as some," Selby said. "We have a little contingency reserve and a little capital outlay."

Election year or not, Selby said, legislators are going to have to raise taxes. "I think that's the only solution we're going to have," he said.

The superintendent said if lawmakers don't raise taxes, the state may be forced to cut state payments by \$200 a student next year.

Factoring in declining enrollment, he said the Goodland district's budget could be half a million less than it is this year.

That will make the problem worse, Selby said, because the district will have to let go of teachers who will move away with their families, dropping enrollment further.

"It makes a bad deal worse," he said. After Tallman talked, Dr. Max Heim, western Kansas field services specialist for the school board associa-

tion, led a brain-storming session to bring out the top problems each district is facing.

The group came up with 83 problems, Selby said, and divided those into seven categories including finance, district cooperation, staffing, curriculum/technology, legislative coordination, economic and community development and mandated programs.

Thorton said the group divided into seven committees, with each taking on one of the seven top problems.

Selby said the committees went into separate rooms to talk about their subject. He said each appointed a chairman and briefly discussed goals.

Thorton said the committees plan to meet sometime before May 17, when they will submit a written report to the service center. More meetings with the

entire group could follow, he said.

Selby said he was a part of the district cooperation committee and members talked about traveling to events together and doing other things to save money. He said the committee will meet early in April.

"We're going to try to get things going while everyone is interested," he said.

Thorton said those who attended the conference agreed to support the school board association's education goals.

The association passed a resolution earlier this year that asks the Legislature to give schools enough money to do seven things.

Those include raising teachers' salaries, giving extra help to disadvantaged students, pay for federal educa-

tion requirements, stopping schools from closing, raising taxes at the state level instead of the local level, increase state aide for all districts and supporting performance goals adopted by the state Board of Education.

The group also formed a statement at the end of the conference. The first paragraph reads:

"Kansas public school students consistently score in the top 10 among the nation's schools on virtually all the nationally standardized tests used to track student performance.

However, the state ranks around 29 or 30 in the amount of money budgeted for public education."

Selby said the meeting was a step in the right direction.

"It was a good spirit of cooperation," he said.

Seminar emphasizes how to get the mental edge

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Freeborn said. Each is a choice. You decide what's going to happen.

"The best peer pressure you have is the pressure to come together to work to win a championship," Freeborn said.

"School is working for you. We are going to give you guys the keys to the kingdom. What you learn today in school, you'll take with you for the rest of your life."

Freeborn said it was interesting that tobacco, alcohol and drugs were not on

the list.

"Where are your teammates tonight?" he asked. "A coach told me a lot of them were on an ski trip. There are other things going on during that ski trip, believe me.

"I will be gone after this weekend. You will have to carry this message for me to those who didn't have the dedication to come to tonight's meeting."

He had the room watch a scene from the movie "Dead Poet's Society," where the character played by Robin Williams tells his students not to be too

analytical about poetry, but to contribute a verse to life.

"How does that apply to us?" Freeborn asked "I don't imagine you guys sit around on weekends reading poetry."

He pulled out a book with blank pages.

"This is what your yearbook for the rest of the year looks like," he said.

"You have a chance to contribute a page. Twenty years from now, you can pull this off a shelf and it will have chronicled what you have done. What

will it say about you?"

He asked the groups to come up with a new list describing what would mean to reach the big-time here in Goodland.

"Someone just told me there is no big-time here," he said. "That's sad. We really need to change that thinking."

The students came up with winning a state championship, getting full-ride scholarships to college, being chosen athlete of the year, and becoming a college athlete.

Freeborn added going on to a suc-

cessful career to their list.

"There are a lot of ways to make the big time here," he said. "Will it happen? Will it to happen."

Setting goals is one of the first steps to reaching success, Freeborn said.

He pulled five varsity football players up on stage and asked them to tell him their goals for deadlifting for the year. One set his goal at 175 pounds, while the highest was 300 pounds.

Freeborn had the students set up the bar, and as a warm-up, had them lift 225 pounds. By the time they were

done lifting, all had done over 400 pounds, and one had lifted over 500.

"So we met our goals today," he said.

"What do we do now?"

"Set them higher."

Freeborn said some of the students would lift more than they ever had during the weightlifting seminar on Saturday.

"We need to change our thinking," he said. "We want to get the edge on the competition. Today, I'm trying to get you to get a mental edge. Tomorrow, we will go for the physical."

Teen arrested in killing of elderly man

WASHINGTON, Kan. (AP)—A 19-year-old man was arrested in the killing of an elderly Washington, Kan., man who was found dead in his home Saturday morning.

Investigators from the Washington County Sheriff's Office and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation apprehended the teen-ager Saturday night at a motel in Manhattan.

Two men and a woman who were staying with the teen at the motel were taken into custody for questioning, sheriff's officials said.

The body of Alva Shaw, 75, was found after friends became worried when he twice missed his daily trips to a local convenience store and several coffee shops.

Washington County Attorney Kim

Cudney said Shaw was found on his bedroom floor, which was covered in blood. His silver 2000 Ford Mustang was missing from his garage.

Authorities found the car outside the motel.

A probable cause hearing was set for the teen-ager for Monday in Washington County, sheriff's officials said.

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Choir gets escort back to the high school

SINGERS, from Page 1

port.

"I told the kids they would have to wait a bit if they needed to use a bathroom, as the police lead us all the way to K-27 and then north to Eighth Street before bringing us back across the city and down Arcade."

Berls said the show choir placed 12th in the national competition, missing the semifinals by 1.8 points.

"Everyone was surprised that this was our first competition," he said. "Most of the other schools had been to at least one or more during the year. This was sort of the 'Super Bowl' of show choir competitions, with the best 15 choirs from all across the U.S.

"We were the second smallest school there. We sang as well as anyone who was there. We knew it was going to be tough. I wanted to see if we could compete at that level, and we know we can do it.

"We got good marks on choreography and showmanship. It was a wonderful trip, and we were first runner-up for another award. This was for the most outstanding show choir for working with and their attitude."

He said some of the choirs had as many as 40-50 people performing, but that in the judging, size didn't seem to matter. It was more on how the choir sang.

"We learned a lot," Berls said. "The kids are ready to go again, and they

worked hard for this. It was good experience and there was a close point spread from the top choir to the bottom.

"We couldn't have asked for anything more. It was a great trip and the kids were great."

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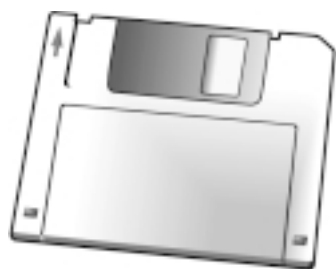
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