

Third case of West Nile confirmed here

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has confirmed the state's second death from West Nile virus, and the third confirmed case in Sherman County.

The individual who died, a 91 year old from Sedgwick County, first had signs of encephalitis starting Sept. 15. The victim was hospitalized but died at the end of September.

"Our deepest sympathies go out to the family suffering this loss," said Dr. Gail Hansen, deputy state epidemiologist.

State health officials also announced that five additional cases of serious West Nile, involving encephalitis, meningitis or acute flaccid paralysis, have been confirmed at the state laboratory in Topeka, bringing the total to 67.

All these patients are expected to recover. They include: a 51 year old in Pottawatomie County, with onset Sept. 3; a 47 year old in Reno County, onset Aug. 31; a 51 year old in Saline County, onset Aug. 26; a 25 year old in Sherman County, onset Sept. 4; and a 75 year old in Washington County, onset Aug. 24

Sherman County now has had three confirmed cases of West Nile disease, but there have been at least 10 unverified cases reported.

To date, 67 cases of West Nile have been confirmed in Kansas, but state health officials say that since the beginning of the virus transmission season, the number of individuals infected is likely to be much greater. Most infections do not cause any

symptoms.

"We sympathize with anyone who has been impacted by West Nile virus this year and urge everyone to take precautions against the illness, regardless of whether there are reported positive cases in your county," Roderick Bremby, health department secretary said. "Coming in contact with mosquitoes infected with West Nile virus is a risk we face all across the state."

Human testing for the disease is generally recommended only for hospitalized patients with severe symptoms. There is no specific treatment. People more than 50 are most susceptible to serious illness.

Ninety counties have confirmed cases. The state health department is now including all the reported cases where testing has

indicated West Nile virus and they have reported there are 423 unverified cases which have been tested by commercial laboratories.

The state lists an additional three unverified deaths from West Nile virus based on death certificates, but the health department will only report West Nile virus deaths to the Center for Disease Control that have been confirmed through the state lab.

Positive tests for West Nile received through blood donations indicate that .12 of 1 percent, or 44 of 37,643 donors, tested positive. The health department is reporting suspected virus cases weekly and blood donation tests monthly.

West Nile Virus is transmitted to humans when a mosquito bites an infected bird and

then bites a human. Symptoms can include headache, low-grade fever and muscle aches, but in rare cases can result in serious illness causing swelling of the brain (encephalitis), swelling of the covering of the brain (meningitis), paralysis, or death. It is estimated that 1 in 150 persons infected will develop a more severe form.

West Nile virus is primarily a disease of birds that is transmitted by mosquitoes on to other birds, horses and humans. Last year, Kansas had 22 serious human cases with no fatalities, and 794 cases involving horses and mules. More than 300 birds were tested. One hundred three of the 105 Kansas counties reported having West Nile virus in either humans, horses, birds or mosquitoes.

Guard unit readies for bivouac with teens



Sgt. Dana Branstetter (left) evaluated a soldier backing a trailer while Sgt. Donald Frecks helped him guide the vehicle into position Saturday morning at the Goodland armory. The evaluation is

part of the process through which soldiers become licensed to operate a specific type of vehicle.

Photo by Greg Stover/The Goodland Star-News

By Greg Stover

The Goodland Star-News

Soldiers of Goodland's National Guard unit spent part of their weekend getting ready to support "Operation Ambush," a bivouac for teens this weekend at Wilson Lake.

Detachment 1 of the 170th Maintenance Company performed its monthly drill last weekend. In addition to preparing equipment for "Operation Ambush," the soldiers did repair and maintenance work.

The 170th is a general support maintenance unit headquartered in Norton. The unit has three detachments, including Detachment 2 in Colby and Detachment 3 in Russell. The unit is attached to the 174th Maintenance Ordnance Battalion in Hays.

Two soldiers had their promotion ceremonies Saturday afternoon, with Capt. Lisa Weishaar, the 170th's commander, presiding. Lt. Lonnie Brungardt, of Almena, Detachment 1 commander, was promoted to first lieutenant. Sgt. James Griffen of Colby was promoted to staff sergeant.

In another ceremony Saturday, Spc. Raymond Sandoval of Burlington extended his Guard enlistment for a year.

About 25 soldiers drill at Goodland's armory, usually during

the first weekend of the month. National Guard soldiers normally attend one weekend drill per month and are ordered to active duty, for about two weeks each year for annual training, also commonly referred to as "summer camp."

Next year the 170th is scheduled to serve its annual training at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. in May. The unit will provide maintenance support to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, which serves as the opposing forces, or "opfor," for units rotating through the center.

This year's annual training was last January at the National Maintenance Training Center at Camp Dodge, Iowa, on the north side of Des Moines.

Sgt. Mark Reasoner, the full-time technician for Detachment 1, said while there, the 170th was evaluated on its ability to perform general support level maintenance and took part in a small field training exercise.

He said the unit passed its evaluation and received several complimentary comments from the staff.

Overall, Reasoner said, the soldiers enjoyed the opportunity to work in a modern, fully equipped facility that was well stocked.



Charter member active

By Greg Stover

The Goodland Star-News

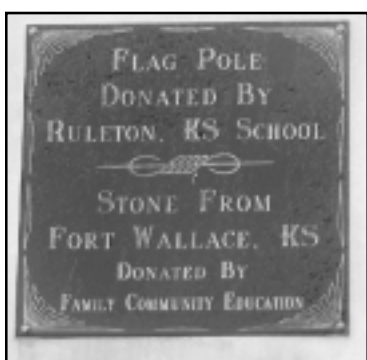
Arbutus Topliff of Goodland is the last surviving charter member of the Lincoln Larks, the local affiliate of the National Association for Family and Community Education.

The Larks were established in 1939 with four charter members. Topliff, still an active member, says she has been involved in several projects promoting community heritage, pride and welfare over the years.

"We have had several champion fair booths, donated books to the library and also helped with the health fairs," she said.

Topliff said that the members find their experiences, such as touring museums and other points of interest, rewarding. Club activities are educational, providing lessons that help them keep pace with changing methods and products and find the best buys.

One recent project was to donate a small memorial for the flagpole near the agriculture building at the Sherman County Fairgrounds. The flagpole was relocated in the early 1970s from Ruleton Elementary



Arbutus Topliff (left) stood next to the flag pole in front of the agriculture building at the Sherman County fairgrounds where the stone and plaque (above) were placed this summer.

School, which closed in 1969, by the Eager Beavers 4-H Club.

LaDona Frerichs, agent assistant in the Sherman County Extension office, said the memorial is part of the Larks' continuing effort to preserve the county's heritage.

The memorial is a metal plaque mounted on an cornerstone from one of the original buildings at Fort Wallace, an old cavalry post in

Wallace County east of Sharon Springs. The engraving was arranged through Mann's Jewelry and Gifts, and J-D Stonecutters mounted the plaque, built the flagpole's concrete base and set the memorial. The project was paid for by the Lincoln Larks.

"Each year holds memories dear to each member," Topliff said. "Everyone enjoys the friendship, laughter and lessons. The Lincoln Larks have a golden length of friendship built through the years."

The Family and Community Education movement is celebrating its 67th year and next week, Oct. 14-20, is National FCE Week.

"National FCE was formed in 1936," said Bettie Lucas, national vice president for public policy. "It is a proactive organization that addresses many concerns of families and communities before they become issues."

In keeping pace with the evolving needs of society, the group focuses today on three major concerns: Continuing education, developing leadership and community action. For information, see www.nafce.org.

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Sewer rates scheduled to go up in March

RATES, from Page 1

For residences that use 300 or less cubic feet of water per month there will not be a raise.

Volk said the city has 2,428 customers. About 2,140 of those are residential and the rest are commercial.

Billinger said the increase looked to be about \$6 a month for the average home, and \$42 for the commercial accounts. He asked if there was any way to judge the average commercial account under the present system.

Pickman said the system now has no rhyme or reason for who gets charged what, and there is no documentation to explain why the rates are set the way they are.

"There are some places that are paying higher rates than others," Pickman said,

"and even the motels, which are supposed to be charged based on the number of rooms, are not consistent."

"The new rate structure is clear and is fairer than what has been here," Neufeld said.

"I agree the whole system needs to be changed," Billinger said, "and we may have to come back and make some adjustments."

Neufeld said under the current system, the schools are being charged based on the number of students, and that while enrollment has been going down, the water use has increased.

"Even with this in place, it needs to be reviewed every year," Blume said, "and if we raise it a little each year, we won't have the problem we now face. There has been no adjustment in 18 years."

Commissioner Chuck Lutters

said it was something that has to be done. He moved to adopt the ordinance as presented, and Blume seconded the motion.

Billinger asked if the commercial rates could be averaged, but the answer was that it was better for them to be charged on the amount they use each month because averaging would not be fair to everyone.

Pickman said the city will need to know after March what level the rates will have to be to pay for the new plant or lagoon system.

"We are limited on choices," Daniels said. "We have to have this in place. It is like a Catch-22 or a rock and a hard spot."

"Even if you were to use general obligation bonds (to finance) the sewer system, this has to be in place," Neufeld said.

Commissioner John Garcia said he knew it had to be raised, but he

was worried about making a hardship on businesses that are already having problems."

Pickman said they would encourage commercial customers to contact the city before the new rates go into effect to see what the impact might be. Daniels, Garcia, Blume and Lutters voted to approve the ordinance.

corrections

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