

Government cuts mental-health budget

By Kevin Johnson

kjohnson@nwkansas.com

Cuts in state and federal money for mental health prompted representatives of the Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas to meet with the joint budget committee of the Kansas Legislature earlier this month.

"We had a reduction in what Medicaid will pay for in the next couple of years," said Walter Hill, executive director of High Plains Mental Health, which serves the Thomas County. "So far, for our budget year in December, we are \$400,000 in the hole."

In a memorandum to the Thomas County commissioners, he noted, "Kansas mental health centers experienced a reduction of \$8 million in state support for non-Medicaid services," leaving High Plains with over a \$250,000 less in state support.

"Nineteen of the 27 centers (in the association) have taken considerable losses," Hill said. "Some have exhausted savings and are going week by week to pay payroll. High Plains is not one of them — yet."

The association represents 27 licensed community mental health centers, which provide services to each region. Centers provide

Disorders lead to other problems

Twenty percent of youths in juvenile justice facilities, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, have a serious emotional disturbance and most have a diagnosable mental disorder.

Up to an additional 30 percent of young people in these facilities have substance abuse disorders or co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders.

The unemployment rate among American adults with depression is 23 percent, compared to 6 percent of the general population, a government survey in

2001 revealed.

On any given night, over 600,000 people are homeless in the U.S., one-third of whom have a serious mental illness, the U.S. Center for Mental Health Services reported.

The World Health Organization estimates that depression and substance abuse are associated with more than 90 percent of all suicides.

The total yearly cost for mental illness in both the private and public sector in the U.S. is \$205 billion.

programs to help those with mental health issues and serve more than 123,000 Kansans each year. As part of licensing regulations, mental health centers are required to provide services to all Kansans, regardless of illness or ability to pay.

In the past two years, these centers have seen a statewide drop in income. Reimbursements from Medicaid, the state-federal program used by welfare clients and others with low income, are often a third or more of a center's revenue. These dollars have steadily declined statewide because of increasing restrictions of Medicaid at the federal and state levels. High Plains Mental

Health Center, which covers north-west Kansas with facilities in Hays, Colby, Goodland, Norton, Osborne and Phillipsburg, has not been immune to the budget cuts.

"To put forth a picture as to how bad the picture is," said Hill, "High Plains is not suffering near the difficulty as others, and we are losing \$400,000, so it is pretty concerning what is happening at other places."

High Plains board member Larry Struckmeyer asked Thomas County commissioners in October for financial support. Mental health centers receive about \$21.5 million a year in county money, he said, and are technically owned by the counties

that they serve.

"We have an obligation to provide services whether the patients can pay or not," said Struckmeyer, "but there is a limit when you don't have any funds coming from the state."

Struckmeyer stressed the importance of treating mental health cases at the county level instead of letting them become the problem of the state.

"The costs of not treating mental health disorders are far more than the costs of treating them," he said. "If we can treat them early, they won't have to go to the state (hospitals), where the costs are much more of a burden to taxpayers."

Mike Hammond, executive director of the state association, talked about the importance of county government money.

"The public mental health system is a partnership between state and local government," Hammond said. "Most Kansans are probably unaware that county government is the cornerstone of the Kansas public mental health system."

Hammond said county government serves two principle roles with respect to mental health centers: determining and establishing the governing structure and providing part of the budget.

The role of the state government to license the centers, statewide oversight and focus on target population, as well as money, he said.

"The first thing they did was reduce \$25.8 million from budget prior to 2006-2007," said Struckmeyer. "This money is necessary for us to function. We were maintaining ourselves and doing all right and then, what brought all this on in the first place, the Federal government gives money for Medicaid to the state, which is supposed to match it dollar for dollar, and instead the state took the federal money and did some financial double dealing. There were supposed to be two

streams of revenue as matching and they weren't, so the feds cut the funds."

"The state was double dipping," Struckmeyer said. "\$13 million was supposed to be state money, but they were actually only putting up 6.5 million and counting it twice."

Despite all of this, the people involved with the mental health centers and High Plains Mental Health remain optimistic their plight has been recognized, their needs were heard and the state will do something about it.

"I think it was reasonably successful," said Struckmeyer referring to the Nov. 9 legislative session. "It sounded like they were favorable, but you can't get politician to do anything without getting a bunch together. I guess we will just have to wait and see. We will definitely be keeping the issues in front of them so we can get this worked out."

"They seemed very attentive to our concerns," Hill said. "All the mental health centers across the state have commissioned a special study to present on the plight of mental health associations. We aren't concerned, because we believe we can convince people to restore the funding we lost."

Oberlin gets wind-energy proposal

By Kimberly Davis

kldavis@nwkansas.com

The Oberlin City Council got a new proposal last week from Sunflower Wind to sell power to the city and agreed Thursday to send it to a consultant for review.

City Attorney Steve Hirsch said he received the draft the day before the meeting. He said he forwarded the draft on to the council, except for Councilman Rob McFee, for whom he didn't have an e-mail address.

Hirsch said he had looked at the proposal but didn't think it was a lot different from the one Sunflower sent a couple of months ago.

The draft hasn't been sent to Joe Herz from Burr Oak, an electrical consultant whom the council hired to look over any proposals. He said he wasn't sure if he should send him a copy or not.

Mayor Joe Stanley said he thought they should send Herz the draft.

Hirsch did say that he had e-mailed Brice Barton with Sunflower Wind to make sure he knew that City Administrator Gary Shike wasn't going to be at the meeting last week.

It looks like the proposal is for 9 cents per kilowatt hour, Stanley said. If anyone bids under that price, he said, Sunflower Wind would get a chance to un-

derbid them. Actually, it seems like everyone gets another chance to bid, said the mayor.

It sounds like if the bidding process doesn't start in a certain time frame, said Councilman Ray Ward, then the city won't be able to do the bidding at all. And it also sounds like all power has to be purchased from Sunflower Wind.

Does anyone know if the city can keep the federal hydropower without having an agreement with Sunflower Electric? asked Councilwoman Rhonda May. Are the two bundled together?

Mayor Stanley said the council did talk about keeping the federal hydropower, which costs about 3 cents a kilowatt hour.

Hirsch said he thinks the two are separate because the contract with the Kansas Municipal Energy Agency only mentions Sunflower Electric.

But this contract, said Councilman Ward, says the city has to purchase all its power from Sunflower Wind.

Stanley said the proposal also sounds like the company could require the city to run its power plant as needed. Hirsch said he isn't sure.

Mr. Herz could probably help the city figure it out, Ward said.

The council agreed that they would send a copy of the draft to the consultant.

Fires lead to county burn ban

BURN BAN, from Page 1

was unknown but may have been electrical.

At Tuesday's county meeting, Commissioner Mitch Tiede said David had requested the burn ban.

The Cheyenne County Fire Department has responded to several calls recently, including a combine fire Saturday at Kendall Helton's farm 13 miles south of St. Francis. The combine was engulfed before firefighters got there, said George Harper, Cheyenne County fire chief, and was destroyed.

The fire may have started in the

engine compartment, he said, where there may have been straw built up. The family were in the field cutting milo, Harper said, and fortunately, the fire did not burn much of the field. The wind wasn't blowing like it had been, he said.

Monday, he said, the department was called to a fire north of St. Francis about three miles from the Nebraska border. The victims called and said it had been put out, he said, so the trucks turned around and to go back to St. Francis. And then the call came to help Sherman County with the Cherry fire, Harper said, and they just went on back out.

McDonald firemen were called to help Atwood with mutual aid at the same time, he said, and there were several departments and farmers with tractors and discs working on the Sherman County fire.

"We've been fortunate all the departments have been able to help," Harper said, adding that Cheyenne County has had a lot of calls caused by people throwing cigarette butts out on the highway.

"It has been so dry here," he said, "it doesn't take much to start a fire right now. I hope we get moisture soon, real soon. If it would just get things damp, it would help a lot."

Nightly through Dec. 6
ENCHANTED
 PG: Some scary images and mild innuendo

Nightly through December 6 • 7:00
 Movie Bucks Make Great Gifts!
 www.goodlandnet.com/movies
Sherman
 1203 Main - Phone 899-6103

Free Movie
Arthur and the Invisibles (PG)
 Sponsored by BANKWEST OF KANSAS, Bowman's Heating and Air Conditioning, Cochran Farm Supply, Topside Office Products, Inc. and Wendy's

SPORTS TELEVISION SCHEDULE

Saturday

10 a.m. 22/28 ESPN College Football Teams TBA

11 a.m. 99/39 WGN NBA Basketball Chicago Bulls at New York Knicks from Madison Square Garden

11:30 a.m. 7/11 CBS College Football Tennessee Volunteers at Kentucky Wildcats from Commonwealth Stadium

12 p.m. 8/8 NBC College Football Grambling State Tigers at Southern Jaguars from Louisiana Superdome

1:30 p.m. 4/6 ABC College Football Regional Coverage - Teams TBA

22/28 ESPN College Football Teams TBA

3 p.m. 7/11 CBS College Football Florida State Seminoles at Florida Gators from Florida Field

5 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 College Football Teams TBA

6 p.m. 4/6 ABC College Football Regional Coverage - Teams TBA

22/28 ESPN College Football Teams TBA

8:30 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 College Basketball Las Vegas Invitational: Championship Teams TBA from Las Vegas

10:30 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 College Basketball Great Alaska Shootout Championship Teams TBA from Anchorage, Alaska

Sunday

10 a.m. 99/39 WGN NBA Basketball Chicago Bulls at Toronto Raptors from Air Canada Centre

11 a.m. 7/11 CBS NFL Football Oakland Raiders at Kansas City Chiefs from Arrowhead Stadium

12:30 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 Women's College Basketball Louisiana State Lady Fighting Tigers at Rutgers Lady Scarlet Knights from Brown Athletic Center

2 p.m. 7/11 CBS NFL Football Denver Broncos at Chicago Bears from Soldier Field

2:30 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 College Basketball Orlando Tournament: 3rd Place Game Teams TBA from Orlando, Fla.

3 p.m. 30/27 FXSP Women's College Basketball Maryland Lady Terrapins at UCLA Lady Bruins from Pauley Pavilion

5:30 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 College Basketball Orlando Tournament: Championship from Orlando, Fla.

6:15 p.m. 8/8 NBC Sunday Night Football Philadelphia Eagles at New England Patriots from Gillette Stadium

7 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 College Basketball Anaheim Classic: 3rd Place Game Teams TBA from Anaheim, Calif.

Monday

5 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 College Basketball Big Ten/ACC Challenge Wake Forest Demon Deacons at Iowa Hawkeyes from Carver-Hawkeye Arena

6:30 p.m. 22/28 ESPN Monday Night Football Miami Dolphins vs Pittsburgh Steelers from Heinz Field

Tuesday

12:30 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 UEFA Champions League Soccer Matchday #5 Sporting Clube de Portugal at Manchester United Red Devils from Old Trafford Stadium

5 p.m. 22/28 ESPN College Basketball Big Ten/ACC Challenge Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets at Indiana Hoosiers from Assembly Hall

7 p.m. 30/27 FXSP College Basketball Colorado Buffaloes at Denver Pioneers

7:30 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 College Basketball Big Ten/ACC Challenge Purdue Boilermakers at Clemson Tigers from Littlejohn Coliseum

12 a.m. 22/28 ESPN SportsCenter from Bristol, Conn.

Wednesday

12:30 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 UEFA Champions League Soccer Matchday #5 Chelsea Blues at Rosenborg BK

5:13 p.m. 22/28 ESPN College Basketball Big Ten/ACC Challenge North Carolina State Wolfpack at Michigan State Spartans from Breslin Events Center

7 p.m. 30/27 FXSP Women's Col-

lege Basketball Colorado State Lady Rams at Denver Lady Pioneers

7:30 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 College Basketball Big Ten/ACC Challenge Virginia Tech Hokies at Penn State Nittany Lions from The Bryce Jordan Center

Thursday

5 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 Women's College Basketball Big Ten/ACC Challenge Purdue Lady Boilermakers at North Carolina Lady Tar Heels from The Dean Smith Center

5:30 p.m. 22/28 ESPN College Football Rutgers Scarlet Knights at Louisville Cardinals from Papa John's Cardinal Stadium

6 p.m. 28/40 TNT NBA Basketball New York Knicks vs Boston Celtics from TD Banknorth Garden

7 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 Women's College Basketball Big Ten/ACC Challenge Oregon Lady Ducks at Kansas State Lady Wildcats from Bramlage Coliseum

8:30 p.m. 28/40 TNT NBA Basketball Denver Nuggets vs Los Angeles Lakers from Staples Center

9 p.m. 30/27 FXSP College Basketball Oklahoma Sooners at USC Trojans from L.A. Sports Arena

Friday

6 p.m. 22/28 ESPN NBA Basketball Boston Celtics at Miami Heat from American Airlines Arena

23/29 ESPN2 College Football Fresno State Bulldogs at New Mexico State Aggies from Aggie Memorial Stadium

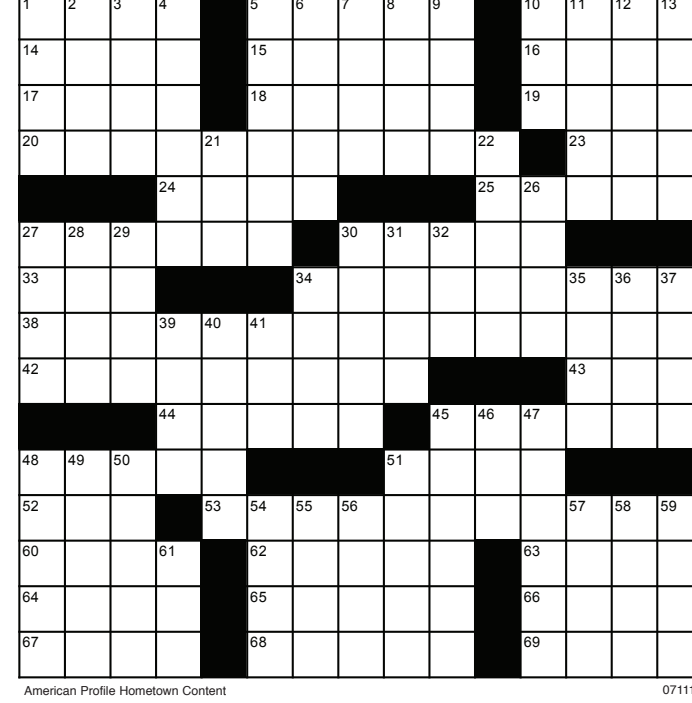
7:30 p.m. 30/27 FXSP College Hockey North Dakota Fighting Sioux at Denver Pioneers from Magness Arena

8:30 p.m. 22/28 ESPN NBA Basketball Los Angeles Clippers at Denver Nuggets from Pepsi Center

10 p.m. 30/27 FXSP College Basketball Iowa State Cyclones at Oregon State Beavers from Gill Coliseum

Crossword Puzzle

The Old College Try



American Profile Hometown Content

© MacNamara & Brand, Inc. 071111

ACROSS

1. City shortage, on rainy days
5. Aristotle's teacher
10. Sunni Triangle locale
14. Stick in the fridge
15. What "phile" means
16. Big silver exporter
17. [see other side]
18. Ouzo flavoring
19. Conical reed
20. Last word in an argument, perhaps
23. Play for a sap
24. Fateful day
25. Riverbank romper
27. Best qualified
30. "With parsley," on fancy menus
33. ___ Line (railroad serving Chicago)
34. Dismissed from one's job
38. Difficult problem
42. Close by
43. "Smoking or ___?"
44. Two-syllable feet
45. Hanging loosely
48. Doppler device
51. "Of course!"
52. Hoppy beverage
53. "Go to jail" phrase
60. Brass component
62. ___ Open (former Florida PGA tourney)
63. Esau, to Jacob
64. Steinbeck's Tom Joad, e.g.
65. Tickle pink
66. Wash up
67. San ___, Italy
68. Upscale watch
69. Takes a gander at

DOWN

1. Condo's kin
2. Thomas ___ Edison
3. Schooner filler
4. Combat mission
5. Pluto is a dwarf one
6. Has a yearning
7. "We try harder" company
8. John, formerly of "ET"
9. Twistable cookie
10. Wall St. debut
11. Show otherwise
12. Sprang up
13. Peculiar
21. Driver's lic. and such

22. Mixologist's supply
26. Org chart section
27. Italian bubbly
28. Timely benefit
29. No-goodnik
30. Bill with billions
31. "The Thin Man" dog
32. P, on a frat house
34. Place for a meter
35. Called up
36. Green's sci.
37. Designer letters
39. Karmann ___ (old Volkswagen)
40. Got wind of
41. "Full Metal Jacket" locale, for short
45. Two-story abode
46. Celestial altar
47. Big name in chocolate
48. Stubble remover
49. Much the same
50. Material for Strauss
51. Mexico's Oaxaca, e.g.
54. Baltic Sea feeder
55. Agnew's plea, for short
56. Paperless test
57. Go to and fro
58. Bend a bit
59. White Monopoly bills
61. Corp. bigwig

The crossword puzzle brought to you by: