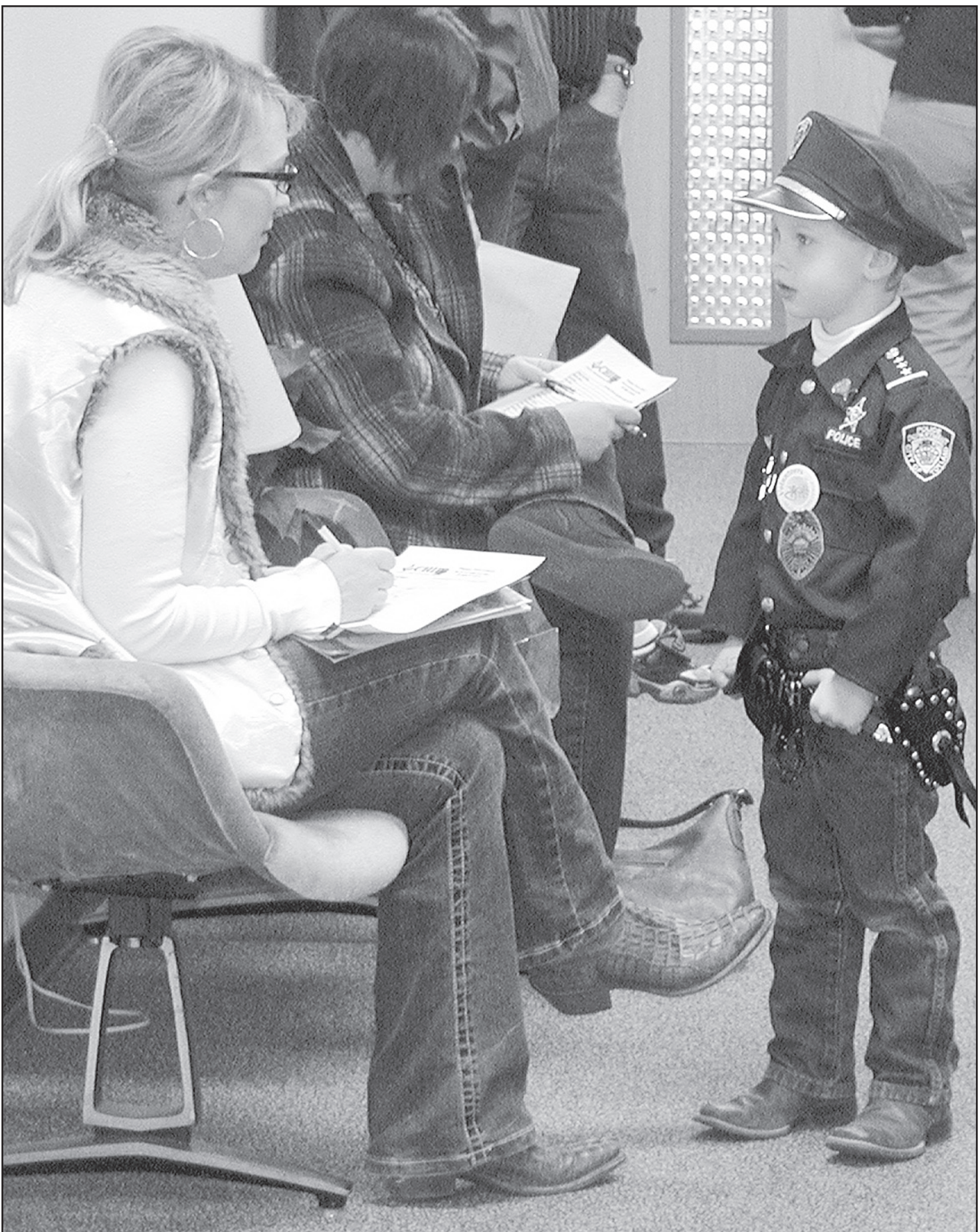


Coming prepared



Billy Eckhardt (in police regalia), son of Patty and Dallas Eckhardt, waited with his mother for his turn at Kansas Child Identification Program offered by law enforcement at the Sherman

County Health Fair on Saturday morning at Northwest Tech. Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

Oberlin site of conference

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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More than 800 farmers and ranchers attended the annual Cover Your Acres no-till farming conference at The Gateway in Oberlin earlier this month.

While Kansas State University Extension agents from all of northwest Kansas and beyond manned the check-in booths in the foyer, every conference room and the Morgan Theatre were full of people learning about the latest in no-till farming, how to preserve moisture, crop rotation, chemicals and fertilizer and farm management.

Meanwhile the arena was stuffed to overflowing with vendors and machinery, including a couple of combines and tractors that would hardly fit through the giant double doors on the north side of the building.

The show drew 50 vendors tout-ing everything from spraying equipment to insurance and estate planning, said Jeanne Falk of Colby, an Extension agronomist who helped organize the show.

"We try to put in topics the producers can take out in the field and use ...," Falk said.

Her records showed that the 800 plus attendees came from 525 operations, she said, mostly from Kansas and Nebraska.

This is the ninth year for the conference, which has always been held

at The Gateway.

"This is the facility that we can put this type of conference together in northwest Kansas," Falk said, noting the many meeting rooms and the arena for displays.

The conference is co-sponsored by Kansas State University Research and Extension and the Northwest Kansas Crop Alliance.

Other conferences are held in Salina and Burlington, Colo., each year, Falk said, but they are different. The Cover Your Acres conference is the only one that brings in experts from Kansas State, Colorado State University and University of Nebraska research facilities to talk about what the farmers want to hear.

"The programs are driven by producers," Falk said. "We meet with groups and see what they want, and pair that with the right specialists from the university to teach."

The conference started as pretty much just no till, she said, but has expanded to include conservation and how to make money in agriculture.

While many of the vendor displays in the arena were from out of town, Greg Lohofener of Market Data, Vickie Bailey of Decatur County Title and Abstract and Crop Production Services were there to represent the Oberlin business community.

Norton to hold disc golf tournament

The Kansas Disc Golf Association, along with the Norton disc golf club, will host a winter food drive benefit disc golf tournament on Saturday at the Elmwood Park disc golf course.

The cost to enter the tournament is \$20 per competitor. Included in the cost of entry is a special Kansas Disc Association Food Drive disc and each competitor will be entered into a state-wide raffle for a disc golf basket, valued at over \$200. A players meeting will be held at 9:45 a.m. and the first round will begin at 10 a.m. After the first round, the club will provide lunch for all players. After lunch, a second round will

be play.

All proceeds from the tournament will go to God's Pantry in Norton to help provide food for needy families in the community. Tournament organizers report that over the past three years, the club has donated more than \$1,000 to God's Pantry. Tournament competitors are also encouraged to bring non-perishable food items to the tournament to be donated to God's Pantry.

For more information about the tournament or to donate to the food drive, contact Don Mordecai at 785-877-5475 or Kent Lockhart at 785-202-2473.

Department seeking energy project applications

TOPEKA—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking applications for assistance to farmers and rural small businesses to complete a variety of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

Funding is available from department's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, commonly known as the Farm Bill. In 2011, Kansas had 23 small businesses and 18 agricultural producers receive assistance grants, totaling nearly \$800,000.

"Renewable energy development presents an enormous economic opportunity for rural America,"

said U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "This funding will assist rural farmers, ranchers and business owners to build renewable energy projects, providing opportunities for new technologies, create green jobs, and help America become more energy self-sufficient."

The Rural Energy for America Program is designed to help agricultural producers and rural small businesses reduce energy costs and consumption and help meet the Nation's critical energy needs. For 2012, the department has approximately \$25.4 million budget authority available to fund the program's activities, which will support at least

\$12.5 million in grant and approximately \$48.5 million in guaranteed loan program level awards. The department is accepting the following applications:

- Renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement grant applications and combination grant and guaranteed loan applications until March 30, 2012;

- Renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement guaranteed loan only applications on a continuous basis up to June 29, 2012;

- Renewable energy system feasibility study applications through March 30, 2012; and

- Energy audits and renewable energy development assistance applications through February 21, 2012.

This funding is an example of the many ways that the Agriculture Department is helping revitalize rural economies to create opportunities for growth and prosperity, support innovative technologies, identify new markets for agricultural producers, and better utilize our nation's natural resources.

"The REAP program has assisted Kansas agricultural producers and small businesses by providing financing for converting to energy efficient irrigation systems; installing

energy efficient equipment, lighting and windows; and developing new renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and geothermal," stated Rural Development Business Programs Director Karissa Berks. "The energy savings that the REAP projects have shown is tremendous, and we look forward to helping innovative Kansas agricultural producers and small businesses with reducing their energy needs."

At Secretary Vilsack's direction, the Agriculture Department is working to develop the national biofuels industry producing energy from non-food sources in every region of the country. The department is

conducting and encouraging research into innovative new energy technologies and processes, helping companies build biorefineries – including the first ever commercial-scale cellulosic ethanol facilities – and supporting farmers, ranchers, and businesses taking risks to pursue new opportunities in biofuels. Along with Federal partners, the department is establishing an aviation biofuels economy, and has expedited rules and efforts to promote production and commercialization of biofuels.

corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

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Valentine's Day is Tuesday, February 14th

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Kindergarten Screening 2012

For all children who have reached the age of 5 (five) on or before August 31, 2012

Wednesday, February 15

8 a.m. - 4 p.m. (no appt. necessary)
At West Elementary (912 W. 12th)

Each child will complete a screening in August at the Elementary School Enrollment.

****IMPORTANT**** Bring to screening: certified copy of birth certificate, Child's immunization records and copy of social security card and School Entry Physical!