



## Did the ants show up?

Steve Duell (above), a farmer, helped Principal Sharon Gregory flip burgers for the Central Elementary cookout Friday. Berkley White (right) watched Shayanne Austin get her hamburger in order before eating.

Photos by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News



# State Treasurer has way to help with college costs

By Tom Betz  
*The Goodland Star-News*

The cost of college, like the price of gasoline, keeps snaking upward, and outside of scholarships, it's nearly impossible for many families to afford the cost.

The financial burden of student loans puts many \$20,000 or more in debt before they have their first job, but only if they go to a college near their home and find a job to help pay the daily living expenses.

State Treasurer Lynn Jenkins told Goodland Rotary Club members last Friday that a program is available to help with college costs.

Families can use the Learning Quest 529



Jenkins

plan, she said, a college savings plan allowed under the federal tax code.

"Anyone can create a Learning Quest account," Jenkins said, "and the best part is you maintain control over the account. An account can be established with as little as \$25 a month."

Learning Quest is one of the duties of the state treasurer Jenkins told the Rotary members about.

She said it was a wonderful way to save for the future and get a tax break at the same time.

She met each person who arrived with a warm handshake and an enthusiastic smile. Jenkins said as the cash management of-

ficer for the state, she receives and transfers about \$16.5 billion.

"I handle the money," she said, "but I don't decide who receives it or how much is spent. That is the Legislature's job. I just handle the money coming in, and send it where they decide."

The office gets about \$16 million a year in unclaimed property that the treasurer takes care of while attempting to find the owners, she said.

She said the office returned about \$8 million last year.

Goodland Rotary showed up on the list, Jenkins told club President Linda Koons. There is an outstanding check for \$30 from Safeway that belongs to the club from back in 1982, she said.

"Anyone can go to our website [kansasstatetreasurer.com](http://kansasstatetreasurer.com) for details, and to check to see if their name is on the list," she said. "If you don't want to do it yourself, call me and I will search for you."

The unclaimed property totals about \$154 million, she said, with over 700,000 properties.

Other divisions of the treasurer's office handle municipal bond services, she said, with about \$10 billion going in and out. The administration division handles low-interest loans, and she is a member of the Pool Money Investment Board which oversees the investment of the money for the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System.

Other programs she talked about were Baby Mint and the Money Wise to teach

kids about handling money and investment.

She said there is a kids section of her website which has educational and fun things for kids and ways to have teachers use the information in their classrooms to teach about finance.

Jenkins said the Money Smart Financial Management Camp, co-sponsored by her office and the Kansas credit unions in October was a success, and another is planned for September.

"The only complaint we had," she said, "was that it wasn't long enough."

She said two credit unions are part of the pilot program, "Save@School," which encourages financial literacy in the classroom.

# Developmental Services gives county commissioners update

By Tom Betz  
*The Goodland Star-News*

Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas has been helping the people of Sherman County for 32 years, and county commissioners heard an update last Tuesday about the efforts and the costs.

Developmental Services is responsible for delivering services to those with mild to severe disabilities within the 18-county regional area. The services are delivered through community based and outreach programs and other service providers.

Each of the 18 counties provides some of the funding for the program, and there are nine individuals being served in Sherman County. There are four on the waiting list from Sherman County.

Last year the organization asked the county to increase the money from the \$40,000 Sherman County has been giving, and the county responded by increasing the funding by \$5,000 to \$45,000. There was no specific request for an increase this year, but the county was asked not to cut any of the money.

Jim Blume, head of the 18-county organization all that time, said he was making his last trip around the district and would be retiring.

"Clarence Scheopner and I have been coming here for 32 years," Blume said as he opened his annual update to the commissioners.

Blume introduced Jerry Michaud, director of quality improvement, who will become the new director of the organization. Blume said Michaud has been with the agency for 15 years, and is glad he will be turning the operation over

to someone who is familiar and experienced with all 18 counties.

"We hate to see Jim leave," Michaud said. "He joined us when we were in the worst financial shape, and got it turned around. He is going to a church in inner-city Denver to work with the disadvantaged and homeless."

"When I first came to Sherman County I was asking for \$1,000 to get the program started," Blume said. "The legislators told me to see if I could find enough people to show a need. I identified 532 people 32 years ago."

"Today, we serve 500 people and have a waiting list of over 100."

"We see more kids with disabilities today. We thought this number would drop with science and abortions, but we are seeing different disabilities."

Scheopner is the Sherman County representative on the board, and a member of the executive committee. Richard Scheopner of Goodland is an at-large member.

Meripat Bowman, director of Golden West Community Services, was at the meeting because the Developmental Services has been helping pay for some training for the Golden West staff.

Blume said a recent change by the Legislature has charged the 18-county organization as a gatekeeper for people in the system and it is responsible for monitoring the quality of care at facilities in the area.

Scheopner said he started with the northwest Kansas group over 30 years ago with his daughter Judy, who is now 45.

"I was looking at homes back then," he said, "and did not like the

state hospitals. I made many trips to Topeka with Jim to get this program funded. He always had his homework done, and we got the state's attention.

"It is better to keep people closer to home and is less expensive than the state hospitals."

Bowman said the Developmental Services organization had shared \$6,000 of the Sherman County money with Golden West for state-required training.

She said Golden West, as a community service provider, has 50 residents in group homes and at a farm near Goodland.

Bowman said the last fee increase the organization had from the state was in 1998, and that it has been stagnant for his people.

"It is hard to give raises when there is nothing more coming in," she said.

Blume said the state doesn't want to look at the problem and the cost of keeping the state hospitals at Larned and Topeka.

He feels there needs to be at least one state hospital, but feels the community service agencies and regional organizations can provide better service at lower cost.

"The Legislature doesn't want to address this," Blume said. "The governor is from Topeka, and the Topeka legislative delegation has an unspoken agreement that if the legislature doesn't bring it up, the governor won't bring it up. That way they can keep the jobs in Topeka."

"We thought with the closure of the state hospitals, money would flow into other parts of the system," Bowman said. "However, money

has not flowed into the other program and we did not see an increase."

Turning to the annual report, Blume said the agency still does not get enough local money.

"We continue to struggle with not having enough local money," he said, thanking the commissioners for an increase to \$45,000 this year.

The financial report showed the total cost of service to Sherman County people last year was \$267,647.

Last year, Sherman County spent \$40,000 out of the health service fund, which comes from a special one-half of 1 percent sales tax. Of the total spent for services, the county's contribution was short by \$29,381, Blume's figures showed.

He did not specifically ask for more money from Sherman County, but asked that the county at least not cut back on what they are spending.

Bowman said she is worried about the elderly and medically fragile people who may be left out of the system as state and federal spending is cut.

"The rate is insufficient," Michaud said, "and the state knows it. We will do what we can with what we have."

Blume said the bigger problem may be that Congress plans to cut Medicaid, the federal program that helps states pay medical and treatment bills, by \$70 billion over the next three years to pay for the war in Iraq.

"That is the money we use to provide the services," he said.

The commissioners said they would review the budget request, and try to help if possible.

# Drug discount card could save county money

County officials heard about a drug discount card program at state training sessions last Thursday, and Tuesday Sherman County commissioners approved paying dues to join the national county organization to get into it.

Sherman County Clerk Janet Rumpel and Mary Messamore, dispatch and emergency management director, talked to the commissioners Friday about the things they heard at the programs. Rumpel and Sheriff Kevin Butts, who arrived later in the meeting, attended a session in Norton. Messamore went to one in Junction City.

Rumpel said the National Association of Counties drug card program was mentioned as a way to reduce the cost of drugs for jail inmates. She said Sedgwick County had joined the program and was seeing a savings of up to \$30,000 a month.

The commissioners asked how much the Sherman County Sheriff's Department was paying for inmates' drugs?

Rumpel said she did not know, but would have Mary Ann Snethen, who handles the county bills, research that question.

Rumpel and Messamore said they were intrigued by the drug card program, which they said could be used by anyone in the county to obtain discounts on prescription drugs. The cards could be handed out to all the

county employees and citizens of the county the women said. Rumpel said the cost for Sherman County would be \$370 to become a member of the national group.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure read the details of the drug program and asked if the Medical Arts Pharmacy or Wal-Mart here participated in the Caremark discount card program. Rumpel and Messamore said they had not checked that out.

Monday, Snethen said she had called Wal-Mart and Medical Arts pharmacies and asked about the Caremark program. She said the pharmacist at Wal-Mart said they participated, and Caesar Miller at Medical Arts said it would work on some prescriptions, but not on all.

Rasure said he saw a mention of an administrative fee that would add to the cost of each prescription purchased.

Messamore said the card would mean a discount of about 20 percent off the price of the prescription, and that Diamond Pharmaceuticals program mentioned adding a fee of \$3 to \$6.99 per prescription.

The commissioners agreed to pay the \$370 dues to the county group, and a small fee for printing cards to be handed out. When Rumpel returns from a meeting today, paperwork will be filled out and submitted for the membership.

**Effective May 11, 2005**  
the Yield signs presently in place at the intersection of County Roads 19 and 68 will be removed and replaced with Stop signs by the authority of Sherman County.  
**Please Drive Safely!**  
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Sherman County

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