

Rexford dairy affects schools and economy

By JAN KATZ ACKERMAN
Colby Free Press

When Tom and Judy McCarty moved their dairy operation to Rexford from Pennsylvania in 1999, they brought holiday traditions with them they share with family and staff.

"We had no inkling of the impact we'd have on the school and economics of this area," Tom McCarty says. "We're working with 14 families and about 30 children, but not all of them are in school."

The McCartys said they had just finished Christmas shopping for the families and their children.

"To me, it's a big deal and we always try to do something for them at Christmas," Tom McCarty said. "We want to show them respect for their respect for us."

The couple says respect, determination and hard work are paying off for the family, who in August plan to open a second dairy four miles east of Bird City in Cheyenne County.

"With three boys here, we definitely can do more than we are now," Mr. McCarty said. "We are in a position to have more management skills used and have the ability to expand the boys' horizons. That's our biggest goal."

Mike, Clay and Ken all work at the dairy and live in Rexford or Colby. Mr. McCarty said a fourth son, David, manages a dairy near Syracuse, but may one day join his brothers in northwest Kansas.

Mike will manage the facility in Cheyenne County.

He said his wife, Amy, and their two sons moved to Rexford from Wyalusing, Pa., in 1999 and plan to move again, making the family's fourth generation in the dairy business. He said while the move and opening a new dairy will be challenging, he is excited about meeting new people and hiring employees.

"The people we've met are great," he said, "but it's hiring new employees and going from zero cows to 1,800 cows in 45 days that will be pretty stressful."

At the Thomas County dairy, five

miles southwest of Rexford on U.S. 83, the McCartys' 16 employees process about 13,000 gallons of milk each day.

Milking 22 of 24 hours each day, the dairy operates three shifts with employees rotating each month. Mike McCarty said the rotation was suggested by the employees themselves so time with their family could vary throughout the cycle.

Day shift leader Leonardo Ortega said he enjoys working at the dairy. Although he earned an accounting degree in Mexico, he was only able to make \$80 per week at his job there.

"I like working here because I work every day (here), and had no pay in Mexico," Mr. Ortega said.

Tom McCarty said while talk of Congressional changes for immigrant workers was a hot topic earlier this year, things have seem to have settled down.

"Things are stable," he said.

Mr. McCarty attributes hard work and good workers to the success of the 1,900-head dairy.

Seed money from the Century II Foundation, a nonprofit community foundation in Bird City, helped the McCartys prepare for the expansion.

"The Century II Foundation has been great to work with," Tom McCarty said.

Century II director Cathy Domsch was unavailable for comment, but Carol Redding, Cheyenne County development director, said she is excited about the new business for her county.

"We know the dairy is going to benefit the county and school," she said, "I'm all for it. Whatever it takes and whoever can help, that's wonderful."

Ms. Redding said she would like to see the McCartys take their new dairy "one step further," and install a digester and generate energy from the cattle's waste.

"Digesters are very expensive," she added, "but either way, the dairy will be a good thing for Cheyenne County."



Oberlin rings in 2007

TO RING IN 2007, this couple (above) danced during a party at the Oberlin American Legion while Monica Lincoln took a breather at one of the tables. The Legion was packed Sunday night for the annual New Year's Eve party, complete with dancing and party hats.

— Herald staff photos by Dave Bergling

Schools grow, thanks to business

While Bird City residents eye the success of the McCarty Dairy in Thomas County, they know Rexford has benefited from it the past six years, as well as the Golden Plains School District.

The Golden Plains schools — the unified district has a high school in Rexford and a grade school in Selden — had to gear up for an influx of workers, many of them immigrants from Mexico.

"In the summer of 2000, after the McCarty Dairy was operational, the district employed Velma 'Chachi' Ochoa as its' first bilingual interpreter," Superintendent Roger Baskerville said.

Mrs. Ochoa's husband, Lionel, had gone to work for the McCartys and later became their foreman.

Mr. Baskerville said during the 2000-2001 school year, four Golden Plains elementary teachers began work on their English as a Second Language endorsement: Lisa Weimer, kindergarten; Teena Johnston, first grade; Lori Miller, second grade; and Deb Miles, fifth grade.

Mr. Baskerville said as the Hispanic population increased, so did Mrs. Ochoa's responsibilities.

"Bilingual textbooks, materials and supplies were ordered," he said. "The Golden Plains minority population was invited to participate in the school system's activities, and an ESL advisory committee, consisting of a minority representative, Chachi and elementary, middle school and high school faculty

members was formed."

The committee meets once a month during the school year. In 2003, the district got some help from a federal grant, called Project Achievement, administered by Emporia State University.

"Under the terms of the grant, USD 316 educators had 15 semester hours of ESL work provided free of charge, as well as all their textbooks and fees," Dr. Baskerville said.

The superintendent and Sally Jones, Title I instructor, were the first of Golden Plains' staff to complete their ESL endorsements under the grant. Since 2004, Julie Ziegelmeier, fifth grade; Margaret Houtz, middle school English; and Traci Uehlin, high school mathematics, have earned their endorsements.

Mr. Baskerville said because of the growing Hispanic population, over the past seven school years the district and community groups have organized Cinco de Mayo celebrations.

The district has developed a parents' and patrons' computer facility available for people to use during the school day.

"Minority adults, as well as nonminority citizens, are free to utilize the room whenever school is in session...", Baskerville said. "During the summer months, specific evenings are set aside for all the district's adults to work on their computer and English and Spanish skills."

Ambulance barn has sprung a leak

The Decatur County Ambulance barn is leaking again and some of the ceiling tiles have been ruined.

Ambulance Director Linda Manning told the county commissioners Tuesday that the flat roof on the ambulance barn has new leaks, probably around screws. The roof probably will need to be sealed as soon as the weather clears, she said. It was leaking before the repairs were made, but sealing should fix the problem.

Ms. Manning said she has some ceiling tiles to replace the damaged ones, which are over the kitchen area, but won't be putting them up until the roof is fixed.

The ambulance wasn't too busy over the weekend, she said, despite the storm. The crews had two calls

on Saturday, one at the Wheat Ridge apartments and another in Oberlin. She said the county road and bridge crew and other county workers helped dig out the crew on call.

"Bless the county guys," she said. "Gaylen (Huntley), bless his heart, he's a blessing."

In other business, commissioners:

- Asked County Clerk Marilyn Horn to swear in new County Commissioner Stan McEvoy on noon on Monday since the next meeting won't be until 9 a.m. Tuesday.

- Heard that both Greg Fidele and Kevin Brown plan to bid on a new ambulance barn overhead door.

- Learned that the county made it through the spraying season and still has a little herbicide left over.

- Were told by Mr. Huntley, the county weed supervisor, that there are problems with a diesel truck he uses. While it runs, he said, it will need to be parked until it can be re-

paired.

- Learned that the county transportation van and the trash contractor were not able to run on Tuesday because of the snow.

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Enrollment: January 3 and 4, 7 to 8:30 p.m. Decatur Community High School Room 112. Education Coordinator: Candy Dejmal, 785-475-2179 (home) or 785-475-2231 (school).

No.	Course Name	CR.	Instructor	Place	Time/Day
CO126	Presentation Software	1	C. Dejmal	H.S.	7-10 p.m.
			Starts: Wed, 1/10	Ends 4/25	
CO176	Intro. to Computer Concepts & Application	3	M. LaRue	H.S.	7-10 p.m.
			Starts: Wed., 1/10	Ends 4/25	
AC101	Accounting Fundamentals	3	C. Dejmal	H.S.	7-10 p.m.
			Starts Mon. 1/18	Ends 4/23	
EN177	English Composition II	3	B. Breth	H.S.	7-10 p.m.
			Starts Mon. 1/8	Ends 4/23	
EN110	Medical Terminology	1	L. Doeden	H.S.	TBA
			Starts TBA	Ends TBA	
HE101	Basic Nutrition	3	M. LaRue	H.S.	7-10 p.m.
			Starts Wed. 1/10	Ends 4/25	
PS176	General Psychology	3	T. Woolsey	H.S.	7-10 p.m.
			Starts Mon. 1/8	Ends 4/23	
PS276	Developmental Psych.	3	T. Woolsey	H.S.	7-10 p.m.
			Starts Weds. 1/10	Ends 4/25	
SO176	Intro. to Sociology	3	J. Wenger	H.S.	7-10 p.m.
			Starts Thurs. 1/11	Ends 4/26	
SO123	Criminology	3	J. Wenger	H.S.	TBA
			Starts TBA	Ends TBA	
MA205	Elements of Statistics	3	P. Dorshorst	H.S.	Day
			Starts Tues. 1/2	Ends 5/17	
MU176	Intro. to Music	3	TBA	H.S.	TBA
			Starts TBA	Ends TBA	

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