U.S.D. 473 patron asks for written assurance on outlying school, board members express commitment

By DAVE BERGMEIER
Editor

CHAPMAN -- A rural Carlton farmer and former Chapman board of education member asked the school board to consider a written agreement that would keep Rural Center Elementary School open.

During Monday’s meeting of the Chapman School Board, LaVerne Myers, 1089 Eden Road, said property owners, particularly those west of Rural Center, 902 1400 Ave., did have a vested interest in keeping the school open and a part of U.S.D. 473.

Without a written agreement Myers said he may see if there is interest by other landowners in discussing a land transfer with other adjacent school districts. Dickinson County has five public school districts, and he has an opinion that consolidation could help. There would always be a need for multiple districts, but he thought five was too many.

He said the most notable districts with closest proximity to the southwest Dickinson County area would be districts that serve Hope, Southeast of Saline and Abilene.

If Rural Center school closed, he believed that only a handful of students would continue to pursue education in the Chapman district, which he said would be unfortunate.

Administrators and board members said they have had high regard for Rural Center as a part of its outlying school network and have continued to pledge their support for keeping it open.

With the district’s need for a bond issue to rebuild schools, Myers would prefer a local board commitment sooner than later because he estimated that taxpayers in his general area pay about $300,000 in property taxes in support of school programs in Chapman. A bond issue could mean an additional $100,000 in property taxes.

Myers said he has not instigated any discussions with any other school boards. He wanted to give the Chapman board time to consider the issue.

Board member Rodney Anderson, who represents the district that includes Rural Center, said after the meeting he was comfortable with the commitment with the board of education’s support of Rural Center.

“We as a board have always been committed to keeping the school open,” he said.

Other board members have expressed their full support, he said, on numerous occasions.

President Eric Keating said the board did not have a resolution with the Smoking Hill Service Center Cooperative. The action that board took was to allow discussions only and that there were several stipulations if discussion continued.

When there was nothing that developed in discussions, any potential talks ended, he said, and the board continued with its support of Rural Center and will continue to do so. He said if the discussions had taken another step, there was no doubt in his mind that the board would have sought more input because it recognizes the importance of all of its attendance centers.

Anderson said “coffee shop” discussions have occurred over many years about the traveling distance between schools in an expansive district, but he said there was no organized plans he was aware of. Rural Center has served the area well and continues to be a good fit for U.S.D. 473 and he saw no foreseeable reason to provide a written agreement.

Anderson said while Chapman board would have to consider a bond issue in the rebuilding process, he said the assertions about the amount of money that would need to be paid to support a multi-million dollar project was premature.

Keating said during the meeting he appreciated Myers’ feedback and also afterward reiterated that point.

“I think it is great for people to come to share their ideas and views,” he said. “I don’t think the closing of Rural Center is a foreseeable option.”

In other action the board:

• Accepted separate demolition bids that totaled about $180,000 for demolition work at the elementary school, district office and sixth grade and high school. Midland Wrecking Inc., Lenexa, was awarded a $62,650 bid for the elementary-related work and L. Blixt Construction Inc., 2646 Sage (See: Chapman, page 8)
Researchers see warmer, stormier Kansas in future!

LAWRENCE (AP) — A new study of trends in the Kansas climate predicts widespread effects from rising emissions of carbon dioxide.

University of Kansas climate scientists Nathan Brunsell and Johan Feddema released their findings on Tuesday.

The research says that with carbon dioxide emissions rising, Kansas is likely to see higher temperatures, stronger storms and drier conditions in the west over the next 90 years.

The scientists’ report doesn’t recommend specific policies. But Brunsell says the findings should lead to decisions on how to meet the expected changes in the state’ climate.
Jacy Porter receives 1+ rating

Kansas Music Teachers Association held State Honors Auditions on Saturday, November 8, at Murphy Hall, University of Kansas in Lawrence. Jacy Porter, piano student of Priscilla Hearn of Hutchinson, participated in the Pre-Collegiate Competition.
Jacy performed “Invention in A Minor” by Bach and “Nocturne in C-Sharp Minor” by Chopin. She received a “1+” rating as well as an Honorable Mention medal.

Congratulations on your success, Jacy!
The University of Kansas debate team competed at the annual Harvard University Tournament, involving 80 of the best teams in the country, Oct. 31-Nov. 3. Chris Stone, Derby sophomore, was the third-place individual speaker. The team of Stone and Topeka freshman Mark Wilkins also won five of eight debates.
On Saturday, Nov. 15, The University of Kansas will honor all undergraduate recipients of its most prestigious scholarships during halftime of the KU-Texas game. Derby students include: Sarah Elizabeth Christians, daughter of Joyce and John Christians, sophomore biology major, Watkins-Berger Scholar; Megan Nicole Gerwick, daughter of Frank and Deborah Gerwick, junior English major, Watkins-Berger Scholar.

Zachary D. Groendyk, son of David and Kathleen Groendyk, junior French major, National Merit Scholar; Aaron Scott King, son of John and Jean King, junior chemical engineering major, Summerfield Scholar; Phillip Michael Morris, son of Malynda Perkins, freshman chemical engineering major, Summerfield Scholar.

Gavin J. Snider, son of Timothy and Rita Snider, senior architecture major, National Merit Scholar; Kevan W. Stout, son of Wayne and Debbie Stout, sophomore pre-sport science/community health major, Summerfield Scholar; Danielle Dee Stuhlsatz, daughter of Davina and Robert Stuhlsatz, freshman molecular biosciences major, Watkins-Berger Scholar.

Margaret Ann Tran, daughter of Chinh and Lan Tran, junior environmental studies major, National Merit Scholar; Cameron Reid Walker, son of Alan and Susan Walker, sophomore accounting major, Summerfield Scholar; John Christopher Weeks, son of Mark and Fayon Weeks, senior architectural engineering major, Summerfield Scholar.
More than 160 University of Kansas students have been selected as resident assistants, scholarship hall proctors, food board managers and housing organization officers. Derby students include: Megan Nicole Gerwick, daughter of Frank and Deborah Gerwick, junior English major, Jayhawker Towers Apartments resident assistant.

Dantes Exador Louis, son of Eva and Robson Louis, junior biochemistry major, Stephenson Scholarship Hall Food Board manager; Lisa Ann Zirkel, daughter of John and Chun Zirkel, junior pre-business major, McCollum Hall resident assistant.