



Putting in fire stalls discussion

By **BOB JOHNSON**
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The ingredients for merger of Allen County and Iola ambulance services may have thickened Tuesday morning.

City Administrator Carl Slaugh, in one of his frequent visits to county commission meetings, asked what challenges might arise if “the county takes over all fire and EMS” services.

Funny he should ask, was Commission Chairman Dick Works’ take on the question.

“We talked about that” in 2005 after a survey of fire protection in the county was done by Kansas Forest Service Fire Management specialists, Works said, and mused, “we need to look at the report again, see what it had to say.”

“It would work if (all) were merged” and responders “had dual roles,” Slaugh said.

But, when asked if Iola’s council members might be willing to pursue such a plan, Slaugh allowed he was “just one (person) and I don’t have a vote.”

Negotiations on a merger of ambulance service was turned over to employees of the two services. The plan they came up with, which apparently would keep all staff in place and not reduce costs, will be made public at a subcommittee meeting April 29.

That’s a sticking point for county commissioners, and Slaugh, who have envisioned

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Register/Bob Johnson

Among singers who will perform in Iola Community Theatre’s “Songs of Inspiration” are, clockwise from lower left, Susie McKinnis, Donna Houser, Gina Storrer, Mary Joseph and Sabra Aguirre.

ICT inspires with ‘Songs’

By **BOB JOHNSON**
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Meld 17 voices to a dozen tunes — gospel, feel-good and patriotic — and the result is Iola Community Theatre’s “Songs of Inspiration,” which will play five times at the Warehouse Theatre, 203 S. Jefferson Ave.

Performances will be Saturday and Sunday and again on April 26-27. Friday and Saturday performances be-

gin at 7:30 p.m. Sunday matinees are at 2 p.m. Tickets for the dessert presentation — \$15 for adults and \$10 for students — are available at Sophisticated Rose, 19 S. Jefferson Ave.

Jan Knewton, director, put together the show with the expectation that local folks are ready for some old-fashioned gospel and spiritual music, some updated a tad, and newer songs that

“remind you of the beauty of life.” The show concludes with several patriotic tunes that Knewton said she hopes “will inspire your thankfulness for freedom we enjoy today.”

The cast has given its all to make the show as good as it is, generously evident at a dress rehearsal Tuesday evening. Rehearsals started

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June 1 D-Day for hospital

By **BOB JOHNSON**
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Ron Baker, new administrator of Allen County Hospital, is a busy man.

“June 1 is D-Day,” he told Allen County commissioners Tuesday, in his first formal meeting with them.

“That’s break-away day from HCA (Hospital Corporation of America),” which has managed the hospital under a lease agreement with the county, but will be excused when the county takes the reins through its board of trustees.

Alan Weber, county counselor, told commissioners \$5 million in operating capital that was part of the original issue would be in place at Community National Bank coincidental to the hospital’s management changeover.

With the new management in place, the hospital won’t have income of consequence for more than a month. Essentially, he said money would be requested as needed.

“We’re trying to make the switch for employees as seamless as possible,” Baker said, and that benefits in a new package may be more favorable than what they had with HCA.

Baker said the switch has entailed a multitude of things, from reworking benefit plans for employees, preparing to physically move from the hospital’s 60-year home on East

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IHS volunteers changed by spring break trip

By **STEVEN SCHWARTZ**
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A group of Iola High students had their eyes opened to a whole different world during their recent spring break.

Chloe Friederich, Brooke Maley, Darcie Collins, Jordan Garcia and Cory Richey met with The Register to describe their week-long road trip of charity and service that spanned 10 states in just nine days.

“We decided we wanted to do something else for spring break than just waste our own money,” Garcia said. In fact, they did the opposite.

Garcia and Collins came up with the idea for the road trip to give, rather than take.

They raised about \$2,800 in local donations and support for the trip from bake sales, raffles and other events.

But, before even leaving town, first on their list was the Allen County Animal Rescue Facility, where they gave \$100 along with dog food for the animal shelter.

Then, with a 12-seat van donated by Sigg Automotive, they hit the road. First stop,



Register/Steven Schwartz

IHS students who volunteered for spring break are, from left, Chloe Friederich, Darcie Collins, Jordan Garcia, Brooke Maley and Corey Richey.

Missouri — where the students stopped by the side of the road to donate a full tank of gas to a woman who was on her way to Oklahoma City and had run out of fuel. They sent

the stranded motorist on her way.

Then the van went to Jonesboro, Ark., to bus tables at Ci-Ci’s Pizza. They also donated a meal to a family dining at the

restaurant.

“It went really well,” Garcia said.

Richey said the family waited at the cash register, asking who had paid for their meal —

they assumed it was the out-of-town high school students busing tables.

“They met us outside to thank us,” Richey said. “The kids were really excited to get a pop.”

The next stop on the road was Memphis, Tenn., where the students worked at a soup kitchen organized by St. Mary’s Catholic Church.

“We got to hear all that they have been through,” Collins said. “And hear their stories.”

Friederich said many of the homeless people were veterans who were down on their luck, and who had not been supported by the government they had put their lives on the line to protect.

“It was really sad to see,” Friederich said.

The group took time to see Memphis, visiting the site of Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination and the St. Patrick’s Day Parade. For Maley, the trip was a bit more special — she had never been out of Kansas, and now she was seeing 10 states in just over one

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Board ponders cost of new standards

By **JOHN HANNA**
Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Kansas State Board of Education members approved new history and social studies standards Tuesday for public schools despite concerns that they don’t do enough to ensure that students learn about minorities and their contributions.

The board voted 9-0 in favor

of the guidelines, which will replace standards in place since December 2004 and overdue for revisions under state law. The Department of Education will use the guidelines to develop annual standardized tests for students and measure how well schools are teaching from the scores. The state hopes to start giving tests based on the new standards by the spring 2016.

Educators involved in drafting the new standards say they emphasize teaching

research and critical thinking skills over memorizing names, dates and facts about historical events. Kansas leaders of the NAACP also had criticized the older standards for having relatively few references to prominent historical figures who were minorities.

Board member Carolyn Campbell, a Topeka Democrat who shared those concerns, said she voted to approve the new standards because they were an improvement but still

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Shields arrested

After a two-month manhunt, including two high-profile raids in the Iola area, Brian Shields, 26, is in custody. He is accused of murdering a Chanute woman, Cristy Wiles, whose body was found in a burned Chanute house in February.

Shields was apprehended near St. Joseph, Mo., after he sped away from an attempted traffic stop in Leavenworth. He swerved to

miss spike strips put down near St. Joseph and his SUV rolled, resulting in him being ejected and injured.

Shields is listed as being in critical condition in a St. Joseph hospital. A female passenger, wearing a seat-belt, also was seriously injured.

A second suspect in Wiles’ murder, Michelle Voorhees, 21, was arrested in February.



★ Hospital

Continued from A1

Madison to new quarters on North Kentucky and considering what to do with the old building.

"We're also working with Via Christi" to keep the office of Drs. Earl Walter and Wesley Stone, now at 401 S. Washington, and staff in place, he said.

Via Christi announced last month it would close the Iola office May 31. Walter said his retirement might be imminent.

As for the existing hospital, Baker said he had no definite idea for what might become of it and asked commissioners Dick Works and Jim Talkington if they did; Tom Williams was not at the meeting. None had a proposal.

"It may be built like the Rock of Gibraltar," Baker said, but to have renovated it to meet today's medical needs was a circumstance he had seen elsewhere — cost of upgrade would be greater than "moving to the

edge of town and building new."

Offhand ideas that have come his way include such things as converting the hospital to a prison — probably not a good fit in a residential area — as well as redoing its interior for apartments and even tearing it down for a park.

"If anyone has any brilliant idea of what to do with the hospital, let us know," said Works.

IN RESPONSE to a query, Baker said having ambulance service operated from the new hospital was not particularly wise financially, even though the hospital usually is the destination for an ambulance run.

He explained having ambulance dispatch from the hospital "would leave federal (Medicare) dollars on the table. Allocating overhead expenses to an ambulance department, would reduce Medicare reimbursement" for the hospital.

COMMISSIONERS approved three expenditures.

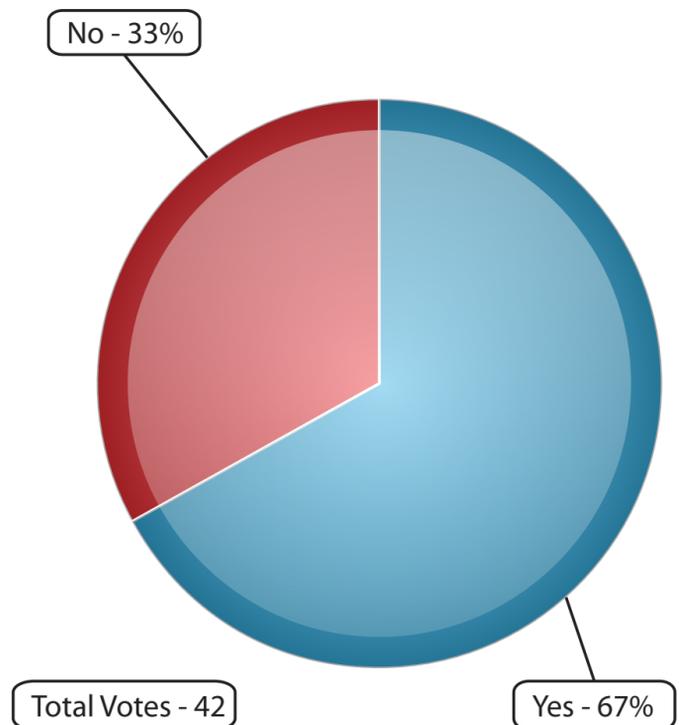
John Becannon's Custom Borders, LaHarpe, will install concrete borders around about four feet of mulch and foliage that rings the recently repainted bandstand on the courthouse lawn. Becannon's bid was \$641.25 for about 95 feet of border.

Public Works Department will purchase a 36-foot-long aluminized pipe, 78 inches in diameter, to carry a stream under a county road a mile southeast of Iola. Welborn Sales, Salina, had the lower bid at \$3,204.

Angie Murphy, dispatch director, was given go-ahead to spend \$1,250 with Console Cleaning Specialists, Chehalis, Wash. The company will deep clean consoles, other computer equipment and furniture at the dispatch center, 410 N. State St., with devices that are quiet and environmentally friendly. A wall also will be removed as part of the bid.

This week's poll results

Do you see North Korea as a viable threat?



For the next poll question see Thursday's paper

★ ICT

Continued from A1

eight weeks ago, and have averaged two hours a night, four nights a week. Knewton figures at least 1,000 accumulated hours of preparation have gone into the show, not counting individual practice time and the work she and the crew have devoted to bring the musical to the stage.

THE 90-MINUTE show starts with "Fly Away Medley," a series of perky yet easy-listening numbers that will set toes to tapping.

"He Loved Us More —

More than Wonderful" blends the 17 voices, with Pam Tressler stepping out for a solo and then a duet with Jim Gilpin.

Those who enjoy upbeat gospel music, there's none better than "Shut De Do," which takes a stroll through the Caribbean with Archie Huskey, an Allen Community College student. He dons an unraveling straw hat to accentuate staging, but there's nothing unraveling about his voice.

Ezekiel's message is recalled in "Dry Bones," which has the singers admonishing their lis-



Archie Huskey

teners to "connect dem bones." They then turn to the gospel of Matthew to note that "fortunes fade but things of the Lord last forever" in "Lay your Treasures in Heav-

en." Donna Houser has a solo part.

Dan Johnson solos in "Dig a Little Deeper" and asks the audience to look "in the storehouse of His love." The 1940s gospel song has a boogie-woogie beat that's delightful.

The first act concludes with a combination of rhythm and blues, country and rock and roll in "He's Everything," which gives Sabra Aguirre a platform to command attention with her deep, rich voice.

THE SECOND act's initial number is more melodic. "What a Won-

derful World" is soothing and prompts memories of the 1970s.

The popular wedding song, "The Prayer," is performed by the quartet of Huskey, Gilpin, Gina Storrer and Aguirre.

Susie McKinnis croons "I Will Always Love You" so well that couples won't be able to resist cuddling.

Then, Storrer, alone on stage, strikes another emotional chord with "Light of a Clear Blue Morning."

All ICT singers grace the stage for four patriotic numbers, "My Land," "Because of the Brave,"

"To Those who Serve" and "God Bless America."

DAVID STERN, an announcer for KIKS-KIOL Radio, provides narrative that seamlessly moves one song to another.

In addition to directing the production, Knewton wrote the script for Stern and adapted music to make the show the upscale production it is.

Many others, listed in the program, help bring all together: Servers are from several Iola churches and the Retired Teachers Association.

★ Break

Continued from A1

sweek.

On the second day in Memphis, the group volunteered at the Memphis Zoo, helping visitors find their way and passing out pamphlets and information.

From Memphis, they traveled to Hazlehurst, Miss., where they donated books and read to students at Sunshine Preschool. They also spent time with the elderly at Pinecrest Retirement Home.

The next stop, in Hattisburg, Miss., seemed to have a profound effect on many of the students.

"That was my favorite part," Collins said.

A woman's house had been badly damaged during a tornado, and while she was gone her home had been looted of nearly all of its belongings. She and her three children were left without many necessities for everyday life.

The students stopped to assist Habitat for Humanity in helping to renovate the home for the woman, so she could move back in.

"I learned to never take anything for granted," Maley said of the experience.

The next stop was the team's "off day" of the trip. They stopped in Orange Beach, Ala. to read at a local preschool. The next day, they went over to Pensacola, Fla., to clean trash off of one of the beaches.

On their way back

through Alabama, the group stopped to donate candy to a group of firefighters, they then stopped in Monroe, La., to spend time with residents at the Marygoss Nursing Home.

"I hadn't done anything to make the difference I had been wanting to make."

— Chloe Friederich

The girls helped to paint many of the women's nails in the home, along with the help of Christy Houk, the owner of All About U Salon in Iola — she was one of the supervisors on the trip. It was there that they met Izola Jordan, a 106-year-old tenant who made an impression on the group.

"She was kickin' it like us," Garcia said laughing.

On their way back toward Kansas, the group stopped in Dallas to help at a home for those afflicted with AIDS — they played bingo and made supper for the residents.

Their final act of kindness was buying a tank of gas for a woman at a gas station in Okmulgee, Okla., before driving back to Iola.

"I HADN'T done anything to make the difference I had been wanting to make," Friederich

said of her motivation to go on the trip.

When asked what she learned from her experiences, she said, "it's the little things that matter."

The group reflected on the different stops they had made — nursing homes, a homeless shelter, schools, destroyed homes — and it was evident that each and every stop had made an impression on them as they traded stories back and forth.

In total, 14 people went on the trip, including siblings and supervisors. The students said they wanted to "give a shout-out" to Billy Collins. Without her, they said they never would have had the motivation to go on the trip.

"Without her, we wouldn't have had the chance to go," Richey said.

"She had to keep us positive," Maley chimed in.

The students said they had some negative feedback on their trip, many people thought they would not be able to do it. But, overall they said the community was "overwhelmingly supportive."

"Many people didn't understand why we were doing something like this," Garcia said as his fellow spring-breakers reflected on their week-long endeavor.

"Having a positive attitude may be more helpful than you think," he said.

★ Standards

Continued from A1

considered them lacking.

The Rev. Ben Scott, a former Topeka school board member and a longtime local and state NAACP leader who served on the standards-drafting committee, said he worries that the guidelines don't

have enough "teeth" to ensure that teachers don't skip over material about minorities.

"If it's not assessed and taught in schools, they're really not going to get it anywhere else," Scott said of students. "I still hope that the state board would monitor these standards."

But Don Gifford, the Department of Education official who supervised work on the new standards, said the state is shifting from a focus on specific content to teaching students how to gather evidence about historical figures and events, then using it frame arguments.



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