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Dickinson County sheriff asking for more jailers

Hoffman made request before inmate suicide

By **TIM UNRUH**
Salina Journal

ABILENE — Hours before Dickinson County Jail inmate Brian D. Ausherman was found unresponsive in his cell, Sheriff Gareth Hoffman was asking county commissioners for another jailer.

The request was denied Feb. 19, and at 6 the next morning, Ausher-

man was pronounced dead at a Wichita hospital. While preliminary findings indicated a suicide, no details have been released, pending the results of a state-mandated investigation by the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.

There were two jailers on duty at the time Ausherman was found in his cell. The sheriff wants more.

"I'm addressing this because of safety, security and liability. All three of those come hand-in-hand when you're talking about a jail. That's why I made the request," Hoffman

said.

But he won't speculate on what might have happened Feb. 19 if more jailers had been working.

"It's an extremely unfortunate incident, and nothing less than a tragedy for (Ausherman's) family. My heart goes out to them, that they've got to deal with this," Hoffman said. "We do the best we can with the tools we're given."

While he had asked commissioners for one more jailer, he maintains

See **SHERIFF**, Page A3

Chapman will get funds for schools

Bond issue won't affect money for new construction

By **DUANE SCHRAG**
Salina Journal

CARLTON — If voters in the Chapman School District turn down an \$8.2 million bond issue to help rebuild schools devastated by last summer's tornado, it would jeopardize federal aid currently available to help pay for the modular

classrooms, but it would not affect aid for the new construction.

Federal disaster aid regulations allow communities to qualify for grants that pay up to 75 percent of the recovery costs not covered by insurance. But work must proceed in a timely fashion, and considerable attention has been focused on July 9, the one-year anniversary of the disaster declaration issued in the

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GUARD

in training



A National Guard soldier tends to a mock casualty during a training mission Wednesday morning at the Smoky Hill Air National Guard Weapons Range.

Photos by **TOM DORSEY**
Salina Journal



Blackhawk helicopters unload National Guard soldiers Wednesday morning at the Smoky Hill Air National Guard Weapons Range for a search-and-rescue training mission.



Kansas Army National Guard soldiers and Kansas Air National Guard airmen conduct a search-and-rescue mission at a mock village at the weapons range. Lt. Col. Jeff Jordan said the joint training provides the units more realistic training experiences.

FEMA: Utilities to be repaid for ice repairs

By **DAVID CLOUSTON**
Salina Journal

Two rural power companies in north-central Kansas have been notified they're to receive nearly all the reimbursement they had sought from the federal government for repairs from the December 2007 ice storm.

DS&O Rural Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Solomon, is scheduled to receive \$15.4 million for 111 different repair projects in

eight different counties covering 315 miles of damaged power line.

Bluestem Electric Cooperative, with offices in Clay Center and Wamego, is to receive \$13.7 million for 276 miles of damaged power line in 11 counties.

A contingent of 22 rural electric cooperatives and five municipal systems negotiated with the Federal Emergency Management Agency

See **FEMA**, Page A3

Obama budget to take on health care reform

By **RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR** and **ANDREW TAYLOR**
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama's first budget will seek \$634 billion over 10 years as a down payment on health care reform — a little more than half what it may ultimately cost to provide every American with medical coverage.

The budget also proposes a mix of tax cuts for the middle class and tax increases for upper-income households.

That includes extending beyond 2010 the \$400 annual tax cut in the stimulus plan just

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signed into law.

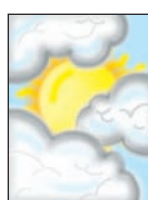
The disclosures came from two administration officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the budget won't be made public until Thursday.

Obama claims his plan can reduce the extraordinary \$1.5 trillion deficit this year to \$533 billion in 2013 — an uncertain goal given the turbulent economy.

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Friday

■ **PAGE 1:** Public libraries, including those in Salina and Abilene, are seeing more patrons and lending more materials. In Friday's Salina Journal, reporter Tim Unruh tells us why more people are checking out books and DVDs and getting on the Internet at their libraries.



FORECAST
High: 54 Low: 45
Mostly cloudy with a north, northwest wind of 6 to 9 mph.
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New city commission should let voters decide smoking ban

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