

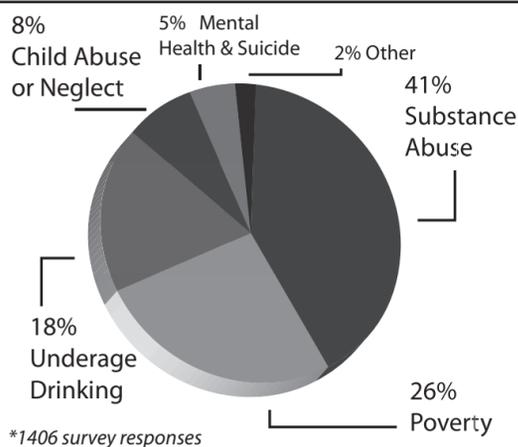
Lofting up downtown



Blaise Hart-Schmidt/Index

A construction worker installs windows at the New England Building on The Square on Tuesday. The building's second floor of is being remodeled into loft apartments.

Responses to Survey Question: "What is Adair County's Greatest Problem?"



Health center identifies needs

BY GRACE FREEMAN
Staff Reporter

Preferred Family Healthcare's ongoing Community Needs Survey identifies substance abuse as Kirksville's biggest problem, followed by underage drinking and poverty.

The results reflect that 40 percent of nearly 1,000 surveyed think drug abuse is the biggest problem in Kirksville, particularly the use of prescription drugs.

Erica Supple, Preferred Family Healthcare's project coordinator for the Prevention Department, conducts projects like the Community Needs Survey to determine how to better serve Kirksville through school programs and a rehabilitation center for substance abuse and mental health, she said.

Using the information they collect from surveys and questionnaires, Preferred Family Health provides middle schools, high schools and colleges in Adair County with information to create programs about underage drinking and drug abuse prevention.

"We've seen, as a resource center, that prescription drugs are pretty big right now and synthetic drugs are emerging," Supple said. "It happens a lot. ... A drug becomes popular, then it's replaced by something else."

During the past, Preferred Family Health has conducted depression screenings at schools and taught sixth and seventh grade students to get messages regarding social problems across to the public through a program called Media Ready.

"They're taught to use billboard ads, to use newspapers, news stations ... basically how to develop a public service announcement," Supple said.

While underage drinking is always go-

ing to be an issue, the middle school seems stable, said Barbara Rice, Kirksville Middle School's Nurse. She said no students have been brought to her by a teacher with suspicion of drug abuse during the past, but prescription drug abuse is likely common.

"Sixth, seventh and eighth graders are a little bit more discreet about it," Rice said. "High schoolers may say, 'Oh boy I went out last night,' but the younger kids talk in their little groups and are more discreet."

The abuse of certain drugs is more common in rural areas than metropolitan, Rice said.

"I think it's more pain medication and medications that are prescribed for ADD and ADHD," Rice said. "Things that are happening in metropolitan areas take a while to get to the rural areas and sometimes it happens the other way around."

Higher poverty rates and lower educational attainment in rural areas can lead to problems similar to Kirksville's, said Michael Seipel, agricultural science professor.

Relative isolation and the lack of access to opportunities like quality education, better job opportunities and more discreet rehabilitation are factors in determining why rural areas are more affected by these problems, Seipel said.

"The fact that everybody knows everybody's business complicates dealing with these issues," Seipel said.

Preferred Family Healthcare's staff and coalitions of volunteers continue to build their Prevention Services based on projects like the Community Needs Survey. To take the survey or learn more about Preferred Family Healthcare's services, visit <http://pfh.org/PreventionServices.htm>.



Andrea Hewitt/Index

A cellphone tower behind City Hall might be replaced by T-Mobile to provide service coverage to the Kirksville area. U.S. Cellular is also considering building a new tower in town.

City works to improve cellphone service

BY ANDI WATKINS DAVIS
Staff Reporter

The City of Kirksville is in the beginning stages of bringing improved cell phone reception to the area.

U.S. Cellular and T-Mobile are considering building new cellphone towers in Kirksville, Brad Selby, Kirksville codes and planning director said.

U.S. Cellular is considering renting City property east of Rotary Park on Hwy 63 for a tower, Selby said. T-Mobile still is trying to identify a location to build.

T-Mobile is considering placing a tower either on the Southwestern Bell building at Washington Street and Marion street or replacing an existing tower behind City Hall, he said.

The Planning and Zoning Commission will hear plans at a public hearing for building towers on the land east of Rotary Park and about the Southwestern Bell building, Selby said. If approved, the City Council will put the plans on its agenda.

Plans to replace the existing tower behind City Hall will not need a public hearing, because the project would be considered maintenance as opposed to building, Selby said.

The new towers potentially could bring monetary benefits to the city, City Manager Mari Macomber said.

"In the case of U.S. Cellular, they would pay us a monthly rental fee," Macomber

said. "In the case of T-Mobile, they would either pay Southwestern Bell if they try to locate on their building or the city."

The city already receives a monthly fee from antennas placed on City water towers by cellphone companies that goes towards the City's utility fund, she said. This year, the city will receive \$143,750 in rental fees from the antennas currently on the water towers.

About \$1300 in rent from a tower built behind City Hall would go into the general fund, Macomber said. Money from the tower built east of Rotary Park could generate about \$500 for the utility fund.

If T-Mobile chooses to replace the existing tower behind City Hall, the City will have the added benefit of receiving a free new tower, Macomber said. The tower currently is used for emergency services provided by the City, such as 911 services and the Sheriff's Department. Those services would remain on a new tower built at that site, she said.

The City began discussions with T-Mobile during 2010. The City was prepared to present plans for a new tower at that time but the project was put on hold when T-Mobile began to discuss merging with AT&T, Macomber said.

The City has had no formal proposals from either company, Macomber said.

"As it stands right now, it wouldn't be until possibly March at the earliest [for plans] to go to planning and zoning," Selby said.

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Special Guest Appearances by McKensie Garber, Miss Missouri Outstanding Teen 2011 & Stacie Cooley, Miss Missouri 2005

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