

NEW MEXICO & LOCAL NEWS

Bingaman aide briefs Des Moines health ctr. group

By **TIM KELLER**
The Chronicle-News

New Mexico's U.S. Sen. Jeff Bingaman sent his field representative Andrew Black Monday night to brief the Des Moines School Health Advisory Committee on important features of the new health reform bill. Hosted by school nurse Nancy Passikoff, who directs the School-based Health & Wellness Center, the dinner meeting was held at The Mandala Center.

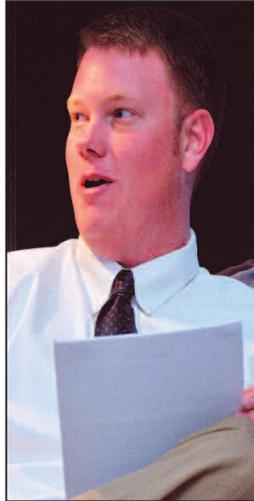
Black began his presentation by reading a long letter from Sen. Bingaman, addressed specifically to the members of the advisory committee. In it, the senator pointed out many components of the recently-enacted health reform bill that will benefit the Des Moines center. The law directs \$150 million to the construction and modernization of school-based health centers, with additional grants to help support staffing for the centers.

One goal of these provisions is the availability of community medical access not only during school days, but on an emergency on-call basis 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Black said, for example, that health care costs can be lowered nationally if a resident of Des Moines, for example, could get a cut stitched up locally instead of going to a hospital emergency room in Raton or Clayton.

Bingaman's letter continued, "As many of you know, New Mexico is the second most uninsured state in the U.S. and we currently have the highest percentage of workers who are uninsured. Those with insurance know that premiums continue to escalate at unsustainable levels. Indeed, New Mexico has the fastest growing premium rates in



Parent and leader of the Community School Advisory Council Ashley Warner discussed day care options.



U.S. Sen. Jeff Bingaman's field representative Andrew Black answered questions from Des Moines residents at The Mandala Center Monday night.



School nurse Nancy Passikoff hosted Monday's health advisory meeting.



Judith Cooper came from Clayton to represent the Union County Collaborative Health Council.

Photos by Tim Keller

the nation. In the year 2000, the average insurance premium for a family of four in New Mexico was approximately \$6,000. By 2006, this rate nearly doubled to \$11,000. Even more alarming is that without health care reform the average family of four in New Mexico was projected to pay \$28,000 a year in premiums by 2016."

Black pointed out the obvious: a family earning, say, \$28,000, would not be able to buy insurance. In both the U.S. and New Mexico, medical bills are the number-one reason for personal bankruptcy; more than half of all personal bankruptcies are medically related.

Black said the recently-enacted health reform bill will directly benefit 66 percent of New Mexicans, with the other third unchanged.

Bingaman is currently co-sponsoring the FIT Kids Act, that if passed, will require annual state and local educational agency report cards on school health and physical education programs. The act includes grants to schools to promote healthy, active lifestyles.

Last year, Bingaman introduced the Comprehensive Obesity Prevention, Treatment, and Reduction Act of 2009, focusing grants on treating and preventing obesity in both children and

adults.

Judith Cooper addressed the group and administered an annual health survey for the Union County Collaborative Health Council in Clayton, which will host Black at another informational meeting May 18 at the Golden Spread meeting room from 10 a.m. to noon.

In other business, local parent and leader of the Community School Advisory Council Ashley Warner raised the question of the school providing day care services during the day as well as during evening events. School board president Damon Brown suggested Warner create a plan with

Acting Superintendent Jaynee Burchard, who was also present, then present the plan to the school board, where he thought it might be well-received.

Others attending the meeting included Sue Vincent, a teacher and member of the health advisory board; Lori Coon, director of The Mandala Center; and local business owner Christina Boyce. Passikoff arranged for all present to sit around a large round table to share a three-course dinner prepared for them by The Mandala Center's chef.

Shuler Anniversary celebration a flurry of activities

By **LAURA L. BREWER**
The Chronicle-News

Bill Fegan, organizer of the 95th anniversary of the Shuler Theater, provided the community with a wonderful variety of activities to celebrate this "Jewel of Raton." Beginning on Thursday with the showing of Home Free, a men's a capella quintet that had the audience singing along, and a special reception following the performance at the Raton Country Club, the weekend festivities were perfectly timed to allow everyone to attend at least one of them.

New Mexico Humanities Chautauqua performers Hoyle Osborne and Jane Voss entertained audiences with ragtime and Roaring Twenties music during two separate afternoon performances; ragtime at the Raton Museum on Friday, and the Flapper songs and history at the Shuler Theater on Saturday. Lunch at the Sweet Shop with music provided by the Raton Choral Society preceded the Friday afternoon Chautauqua performance, and a special reception for the Pospesil's photography of Hollywood Stars followed that afternoon at the Old Pass Gallery. The opening performance of "Arsenic and Old Lace" was followed by another reception for the performers at the White House Saloon Restaurant.

Saturday saw more activities, including a time of reminiscence for several former and present Kaleidoscope Players and community members, a mini-documentary, "Raton's Jewel: The Shuler Theater" by Dorothy Best, shown at El Raton Theater; another reception at the Raton Museum, and another evening performance of "Arsenic and Old Lace."

Sunday brought the celebration to a close with a special service at the Episcopal Church followed by a final farewell lunch at the Sands Restaurant.

Raton and northeastern New Mexico paid homage to this beautiful theater that has meant so much to so



Chautauqua entertainers, Jane Voss and Hoyle Osborne, present lively ragtime music, piano and vocals, at the Raton Museum on Friday afternoon as part of the Shuler 95th anniversary celebration.



A group of former and present Kaleidoscope Players pose together after the museum Chautauqua program. It was the first time in years that they have all been together. From left are Howard Woodworth, Sandy Mantz, Carol Woodworth, Bill Fegan, Ben Zeller, Steve Simpson, Barbara Farrar Evans and Tom Evans.



The final farewell for the weekend's event calls for a toast to Bill Fegan and to the Shuler.



many. Throughout the festivities, the community expressed its admiration and gratitude to Bill Fegan for providing years of performances at the Shuler Theater through his acting, directing, writing, promot-

ing, teaching, giving tours, and producing plays and performances: "Thank you, Bill Fegan!"

Photos by Laura L. Brewer

A number of Shuler participants recalled their experiences with the theater as it celebrated 95 years this past weekend - including, above, David Ode and Howard Woodworth.