

# Aging school bus fleet causing concern for district

By Joey Falkoff

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The wheels on the bus are going round and round in Colby for now.

Whether that's still the case in five years is something the Colby school board will have to decide.

Currently, the Colby school district has 11 school buses, two activity buses and two spare route buses in its fleet, but only two have been purchased since 2000; the last in 2004. In 2013, some of Colby's bus fleet can no longer be used.

Kansas state laws permit a school bus to run for a maximum of 20 years, and according to transportation director Alan Wade, eight buses date back to 1992.

With the situation getting more desperate by the day, Wade is seeking an alternative solution he plans to present the board at their next meeting June 2.

"Since we've gotten so far behind, we're going to need to buy more than one new bus a year," said Wade, whose been employed by the district since 1991. "I don't know that we can. We could lease a fleet of buses. I know several schools like Oakley, Golden Plains and lots in eastern Kansas are doing that."

Wade's proposal calls for the district to spend a \$100,000-110,000 a year for the next five years plus paying 3 to 4 percent interest to lease a fleet of 11 buses. Seven of the buses would be smaller, holding up to 25 passengers. The other four could hold up to 71. At the end of the five years, the district could negotiate another lease. Wade said they could also pay \$140,000 a year for five years and then own the entire fleet at the end of the lease.

Wade estimated the cost of one 65-71 passenger bus to cost anywhere from \$73,000-75,000 and a smaller bus to run anywhere from \$50,000-75,000.

Rather than spending that amount every year for the foreseeable future, Wade said lease purchasing would better suit the district.

"We've asked for a new bus or suburban every year, but most years they don't have the money because it needs to be spent other places," said Wade. "The only way around it is to do leases, bonds or that type of thing."

Wade met with business manager Jo DeYoung about the situation before Monday's board meeting. According to DeYoung, Wade said he would be satisfied if the

board agreed to purchase one or two buses a year for the next five years. DeYoung made it known she is not usually in favor of lease purchasing.

"It doesn't make sense for us to spend three to four percent of our money on interest if we can avoid it," said DeYoung.

The district has \$415,000 in its capital outlay fund. But, due to the lack of a capital outlay mill levy (since 1998) the district has virtually no way to replenish that money, if it's spent on buses. Therefore, vehicles usually are purchased at the end of the year with "saved" general or supplemental general fund dollars. Lately, technology purchases and expenses have absorbed many dollars.

"The capital outlay is the reason we have a problem," said superintendent Kirk Nielsen.

Board members Gerry Fulwider and Stan Molstad seemed to suggest purchasing any new buses

would be a problem.

While De Young was summing up Wade's demands, Fulwider became agitated at DeYoung, raising his voice to say "And what else did he say?"

Superintendent Kirk Nielsen responded by saying, "He feels his fleet is getting old."

Fulwider then remarked, "Maybe a lot of things are getting old."

"I think Mr. Fulwider seemed upset because he felt I or Mr. Wade was trying to tell the board what to do," said DeYoung.

Moments later, Molstad asked if the district had any buses that were going to run off the road. Nielsen told him they didn't have any to which Molstad responded, "Then there you go."

"Why would you wait until it's unsafe," said Wade. "Do you suppose most people wait until their car is unsafe to replace it? We have to take care of things prior to them being unsafe."

Wade did agree all of his buses

were safe for the time being.

"If I had an unsafe bus, we wouldn't drive it," said Wade. "The state checks literally everything on our buses before the start of every school year. The last thing we want is an unsafe bus."

Although Suburbans aren't included in his lease proposal, Wade says the district also needs to look at replacing those in the near future.

"We've got five Suburbans with over 200,000 miles on them," said Wade. "All the new ones have well over 100,000 miles. I know they'll last up to 230,000 miles, but there's more than that on some of them."

A new Suburban is estimated to cost anywhere from \$32,000-40,000 depending on the model.

Ideally, Wade said he'd like

to replace every suburban that reaches 100,000 miles and have the maintenance staff use the old ones to drive around town. He also mentioned selling them after a period of time.

"Somehow we've gotten out of that practice," said Wade.

Wade said he understands the financial constraints the district is under, but also feels this is an issue that's going to have to be dealt with.

"How can you have hard feelings? We're all one big family," said Wade. "I want new buses and Suburbans, but in the same respect they need new chairs, air conditioning. I'm not upset or angry, but this is something we have to face. We can't just buy one and get caught up."

## •PUBLIC NOTICE•

### IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF BILLIE JUNIOR KEISWETTER, DECEASED

Published in The Norton Telegram on Friday, May 23, 30, June 6, 2008 (3T)

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF NORTON COUNTY, KANSAS

In the Matter of the Estate of BILLIE JUNIOR KEISWETTER, Deceased

Case No. 2008-PR-20

NOTICE OF HEARING THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

YOU ARE HEREBY notified that a petition has been filed in this County by Cristie Foster, as an heir of the decedent Billie Junior Keiswetter, praying for the determination of the descent; and you

are hereby required to file your written defenses thereto on or before June 16, 2008 at 1:00 p.m. of said day, in said Court, in the City of Norton, in Norton County, Kansas at which time and place said cause will be heard. Should you fail therein, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon said petition.

Cristie Foster, Petitioner

Paula D. Hofaker #16169  
Law Office of  
Paula D. Hofaker, P.A.  
P.O. Box 482  
Logan, KS 67646  
785-689-4606  
Attorney for Petitioner

## •PUBLIC NOTICE•

### IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF MARY M. CALHOON, DECEASED

Published in The Norton Telegram on Friday, May 23, 30, June 6, 2008 (3T)

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF NORTON COUNTY, KANSAS

In the Matter of the Estate of MARY M. CALHOON, Deceased

Case No. 2008-PR-18

NOTICE OF HEARING AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are hereby notified that on the 23rd day of April, 2008, a Petition was filed in this Court by Mary Benoit, an heir, devisee, and legatee, of Mary Calhoon, deceased, praying that Mary Benoit be appointed Administrator without bond, and that she be granted Letters of Administration.

You are required to file your written defenses thereto on or before June

16, 2008 at 1:30 p.m. of such day, in this Court, in the City of Norton in Norton County, Kansas, at which time and place the cause will be heard. Should you fail, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon the Petition.

All creditors are notified to exhibit their demands against the estate within four months from the date of first publication of this Notice, as provided by law, and if their demands are not thus exhibited, they shall be forever barred.

Mary Benoit, Petitioner

Paula D. Hofaker #16169  
Law Office of  
Paula D. Hofaker, PA  
P.O. Box 482  
Logan, KS 67646  
(785) 689-4606  
Attorney for the  
Estate of Mary Calhoon

## •PUBLIC NOTICE•

### IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF GLENN L. ARCHER, DECEASED AND RUTH A. ARCHER, DECEASED

Published in The Norton Telegram on Friday, May 16, 23, 30, 2008 (3T)

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF NORTON COUNTY, KANSAS

In the Matter of the Estate of GLENN L. ARCHER, Deceased and RUTH A. ARCHER, Deceased

Case No. 2008-PR-19

NOTICE OF HEARING ON THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are hereby notified that a petition has been filed in this Court by Glenn L. Archer, Jr., as an heir of Glenn L. Archer and Ruth A. Archer, deceased, praying for the determination of descent of the following described real estate:

An undivided one-third (1/3) interest in the oil, gas and other minerals in, or on under the following described real estate: The Northwest Quarter (NW/4), Southeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter (SE/4 SW/4), North Half of the Southwest Quarter (N/2 SW/4), Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter (NW/4 SE/4) and Southwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter (SW/4 NE/4) of Section Twelve (12), Township Five (5) South, Range Twenty-two (22) West, being 360 acres, and a lane or roadway along the West side of the North half of the

Northeast Quarter (N/2 NE/4) of Section Twelve (12), Township Five (5) South, Range Twenty-two (22) West, being approximately one (1) acre, more or less, and the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter (NE/4 NE/4) of Section Eleven (11), Township Five (5) South, Range Twenty-two (22) West of the Sixth P.M., being 40 acres;

and all other property, real and personal, or interest therein owned by the respective decedents, Glenn L. Archer and Ruth A. Archer, at the time of their respective deaths; and you are hereby required to file your written defenses thereto on or before June 11, 2008, at 11:00 o'clock a.m. of said day in said Court, in the City of Norton, in Norton County, Kansas, at which time and place said cause will be heard. Should you fail therein, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon said petition.

GLENN L. ARCHER, JR.,  
Petitioner

R. Douglas Sebelius #09157  
SEBELIUS & GRIFFITHS, LLP  
105 South Norton Street  
P. O. Box 10  
Norton, Ks 67654-0010  
785-877-5143  
Attorney for Petitioner

## •PUBLIC NOTICE•

### NOTICE OF HEARING ON ADOPTION OF NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PLAN BEFORE THE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #294 OBERLIN

Published in The Norton Telegram on Friday, May 30 and Friday, June 6 (2T)

NOTICE OF HEARING ON ADOPTION OF NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PLAN BEFORE THE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #294, OBERLIN

You are hereby advised, pursuant to the provisions of KSA 12-17, 117, a public hearing will be held in the Unified Office located at 131 E. Commercial, Oberlin on the 9th day of June, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. to consider whether the abovementioned taxing districts should

adopt a "Neighborhood Revitalization Plan" for all of the area and territory lying within the corporate limits of their district. The Norton County Commission enacted the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan for Norton County, Kansas on November 13, 2007.

The proposed Neighborhood Revitalization Plan is available for public review and consideration at the office of the Norton County Clerk in the Norton County Courthouse during regular business hours or online at <http://www.discovernorton.com>.

## 71st Annual Flint Hills Rodeo - June 6, 7 and 8 Strong City, Kansas

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June 7	2pm	Annual Rodeo Parade
	5pm	Kids Stick Horse Rodeo - Trade Show
	8pm	Rodeo
	10pm	Dance: Powder River Band
June 8	10:45am	Cowboy Church Service
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