

# COLBY FREE PRESS

10 pages

## Remember...

# Sunday brings 34-cent stamp

By TOM DREILING

Free Press Publisher

The magic number is "34."

And it goes into effect Sunday.

That's the day the price of a first-class stamp goes from 33 cents to 34 cents, said Jim McDonald, Colby postmaster.

McDonald said the increase to 34 cents will cost the average household about 15 cents a month.

And when you insert a quarter and a dime into a vending machine, you'll get your change in the form of a hanging 1-cent stamp.

You can also use other change factors that add up to 34 cents, like three dimes and four pennies, or a quarter, a nickel and four pennies.

McDonald said that since Dec. 15, the U.S. Postal Service has made available three non-denominated first-class stamps (good for the new 34-cent first-class letter rate) and new 34-cent stamps to enable customers to purchase stamps at their convenience before the new rates are in effect.

A Postal Service *MediaAlert* issued by McDonald, said that one-cent stamps are available and can also be

purchased through lobby vending machines in packets of 50 stamps.

New rate 34-cent stamps also are available nationwide in three stamp designs: Statue of Liberty, and Flowers stamps (both sold in books of 20 and coils of 100) and the Farm Flag stamp (sold in a pane of 20 self-adhesives).

The media alert alerted postal patrons to the fact that both the non-denominated and 34-cent stamps will be available at more outlets than ever. In addition to some 38,000 postal retail outlets, including post offices, postal stores and community post offices, the Postal Service will make stamps available at non-postal locations through its comprehensive self-service vending program.

Stamps can also be ordered on the Internet through the Postal Store at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com), through Stamps by Phone at 1-800-STAMPS24, by calling the Colby Post Office at (785) 462-7904, or for people outside the Colby area by calling your post office, for a Stamps by Mail order form.

Remember, starting Sunday the number is "34."

## Ranchers, lawmakers upset with presentation

GREATBEND (AP)— Research at Kansas State University favors huge farm corporations that are big donors to the land-grant university, Kansas State law professor Roger McEowen told farmers at a legislative tour on agricultural concentration.

"I am concerned research results are skewed on the side of the hand that is feeding them," McEowen said Thursday.

Ranchers and lawmakers alike were upset over a presentation in which Kansas State agricultural economist Jim Mintert touted the advantages of ag concentration.

Mintert told the group that in the last century the percentage of people in-

involved in production agriculture in this nation fell from 90 percent to less than 3 percent. That allowed the industrial revolution to occur and made possible great strides in nutrition, life expectancy and income levels, he said.

"From the long-term perspective, concentration in the ag sector has provided innumerable benefits to society," Mintert said. His presentation so riled other speakers and attendees that the listening tour—originally designed to discuss the effects of concentration on the livestock and grain industries—quickly expanded to a discussion about whether Kansas State was fulfilling its role as a land-grant university established to help family farmers.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press



## Away goes the manger

The Abilene Hustlers 4-H Club, along with parents and sponsors, took advantage of the warmer temperatures to take down the nativity scene props at Fike Park on Thursday. **ABOVE:** Pat Erickson (left) and Elaine Bremerkamp repaired many of the pieces in preparation for set up next year. In the background (left to right): Donna Lamm, Steve Bremerkamp and Freddie Lamm dismantled the manger for storage. **AT LEFT:** Cindy Schafer, along with her daughter, Lindsey, mended another one of the props. Bremerkamp said this is the second year the Abilene Hustlers have set up and taken down the display. Others helping, but not pictured, were Erika Erickson, Carrie and Seth Bredemeier and Sue Draper.

# Methamphetamine lab seizures hit 655 in Kansas for year 2000

TOPEKA (AP)— The number of methamphetamine labs continued on the rise last year, but tougher laws have slowed the increase, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation said.

"We are no longer doubling like we have been. The increase has slowed down. We are not drowning as fast," KBI spokesman Kyle Smith said Thursday.

Preliminary figures for 2000 show 655 meth labs were seized last year, compared to 511 in 1999 and 189 in 1998. That translate to a 28

percent increase from 1999 to 2000 and a 170 percent increase from 1998 to 1999.

There were 99 labs seized in 1997; 71 in 1996, seven in 1995 and four in 1994. Kansas finished third nationally in the number of meth labs seized in 1999.

Smith said the 2000 figures are through Dec. 27 and he expects a slight increase when the KBI gets all the numbers through the end of the year statewide.

Leading the state in meth lab seizures last

year was Shawnee County with 58, compared to 23 in 1999.

Rounding out the top 10 list for 2000 were Cowley County with 54 labs seized; Sedgwick County, 48; Allen County 43; Saline County, 38; Cherokee County, 32; Crawford County, 31; Butler County, 23; Reno County, 22, and Jackson County, 19.

Smith attributed the smaller increase from 1999-2000 and 1998-99 to educating retailers about what products can be used for making the

illegal drug and 1999 changes in state law.

"We are making it a little more difficult for them to make it," Smith said. "It's still a crisis but it is not as bad as it could be."

Meth labs can range from the sophisticated to the crude. The clandestine labs can be set up a variety of locations — a car trunk, bathtub, closet or just about anywhere there's space to mix chemicals.

There are various ways to make meth, but a common method uses anhydrous ammonia, a

chemical commonly used as a fertilizer by farmers. Most of the other ingredients are available in over-the-counter products such as cold and allergy medicine.

Some retailers have started the practice of limiting the amount of cold and allergy medication a person can purchase at one time.

Under the 1999 changes in the law, those convicted of meth making the first time face 1 1/2 years behind bars, compared to the previous maximum of four years.

## Here's to you...

√*Eva Deckman* — on your 100th birthday today.

√*Amy Nichols* — on your 100th birthday Jan. 2.

√*William A. Poland* — on your promotion with the Kansas Highway Patrol.

√*Ron Evans* — chairman of the Thomas County Commission.

√*Marlene Carpenter* — on your retirement.

√*Laura Cook* — keep focused on that worthwhile cause.

√*Reps. Jim Morrison* and *John Faber* — on your leadership appointments.

√*Mike & Virginia Sayyae* — keep that chicken cooking.

√*Mike Albers* — the city's top technical upgrader.

√*Paul Heskett* — the area's top Bop Shop(er).

(Birthdays and anniversaries are in today's *My Turn* column on page 2.

Call us at 462-3963 to request an inclusion in this weekly salute.)

## Stork brings first baby to Thomas County today

The stork arrived in Colby today to deliver Thomas County's "First Baby of the New Year."

Chandler Welker arrived at Citizens Medical Center at 6:37 a.m., said hospital spokesperson Gwen Young in a call to the *Free Press* shortly before noon.

The baby weighed in at 6 pounds, 6 ounces and is the son of Jason and Jennifer Welker of Colby.

Chandler is the couple's second child and will be welcomed home by a 3-year-old sister.

As the first baby, Chandler will be showered with a number of gifts by 18 local businesses.

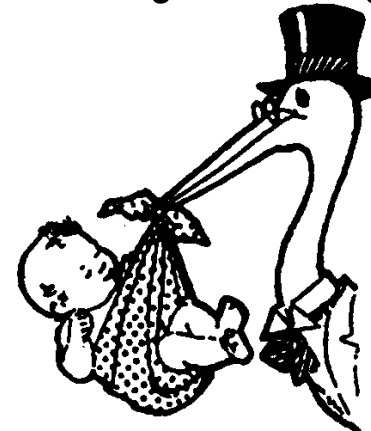
The family's picture will appear in Monday's *Free Press*.

The businesses are:

- Someplace Special
- S&T Telephone
- Dillons
- Thomas County Health Department
- Farmers & Merchants Bank of Colby
- Citizens Medical Center

- Gambino's Pizza
- Wal-Mart
- Family Center for Health Care,
- Village Inn
- First National Bank
- Omicron Upsilon
- Colby Bowl
- Colby Photo
- Gold Bank
- The Sports Shoppe
- Wark's Embroidery and Gifts
- The Colby Free Press.

Details of the gifts and highlights will also appear Monday.



## Briefly

### Weather: No change

The National Weather Service doesn't anticipate any major changes in the Colby area weather through the early part of next week. Tonight's forecast calls for clear skies, lows near 30 and west winds 10-20 mph turning to the north late. Saturday, mostly sunny, highs right around the 50-degree mark and strong north winds 15-25 mph and gusty. Saturday night, clear, lows 20-25 and north winds 15-25 mph and gusty. Sunday and Monday, continued dry, lows in the 20s and highs in the 40s.

Thursday's high in Colby set a record for the date of 72 degrees; the only record of 70 degrees was set in 1956. This morning's low was 21 degrees. There was no precipitation over the past 24 hours and the soil temperature at the four-

inch depth is averaging 32 degrees. The records for Jan. 5: 72 in 1927 and -22 in 1942. (The daily temperatures and precipitation are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

### Commissioners meet Monday

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday in the commissioners room of the courthouse.

Roads Supervisor Chris Bieker will open bids for asphalt at 9 a.m. Bettie Hamill, custodian, is on the agenda at 9:30 a.m. to discuss her duties.

Swearing in of newly-elected county and state officials will be at 10 a.m.

Bids for the new auditor for the county will be opened at

11 a.m. All meetings are open to the public.

### College board to check facilities

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees will meet at 5 p.m. Tuesday in the board room of the Thomas Hall Administration Building.

The board will be taking a tour of campus facilities. The contract with Ken Mitchell for the mural at the Bedker Memorial Complex is expected to be approved.

The Faculty Alliance request for unit redefinition will be discussed.

The request was made at the last meeting, and the board had asked for more information. The meeting is being held on Tuesday because the college is closed Monday for Mar-

tin Luther King's birthday, a federal holiday.

### Square dance lessons offered

The Golden Buckle Square Dance Club of Colby is offering beginning square dance lessons if there is an interest in the community, sources said. For information, call (785) 462-2958 or (785) 462-7996.

### Singles dance planned today

The Colby Singles Group has announced there will be a dance from 8 p.m. to midnight on Friday, Jan. 5, according to Don Birzer, one of the organizers. Jim Barnes, Orleans, Neb., is providing entertainment and all single people and alums are invited.

