



COLBY FREE PRESS

City council accepts bid

Airport to get new runway lighting

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

The Colby City Council took another step in improving the municipal airport Tuesday night when they voted to accept a bid to install new lighting for the runways.

Jim's Electric, Colby, got the contract to install lighting for the current runways and move the conduit to allow the option of widening the runways 25 feet if needed.

The bid of \$180,553 was almost half of the other bid from B&W Electrical Contracts, Salina, of \$353,792. Another option would have been to replace the lights without moving the conduit, which would have been about \$8,000 less, but the council decided the cost of moving the conduit later would be much more. City Manager Carolyn Armstrong told the

council she had talked to Jeff Unger, the owner of Jim's Electric, and he was standing by his bid. The project is part of a state grant and the city's portion is about \$45,000.

The council also approved the design and inspection contracts with Penco, Inc. on the project, raising the total cost for the city to \$61,513.25.

Another consideration for the airport was a self-fueling system. Although the council took no action, they considered the need for a system to enable pilots to fuel their own planes.

Airport Board President Paul Steele said a new system would give the council some flexibility if money got tight.

"The impression I get is that money is going to get tighter rather than looser around this table," he said. The \$20,000 project probably

wouldn't mean a large increase in airport traffic, because "there aren't that many people flying these days," said Steele.

It would, however, relieve some of the duties of a fixed base operator, should the council decide to eliminate the position. Steele also said he believed it would be a plus should an air ambulance company decide to locate in Colby.

Airport manager Mark Ostmeyer, also at the meeting, said, "The cost is not justified for such a system." He cited low evening usage and only four planes at the airport without 24-hour access. Ostmeyer also said officials from Eagle-Med, an air ambulance company, had cited lack of hangar space, a poor approach and no maintenance as problems with locating in Colby.

"We have the business," he said, "but they

are leaning toward Goodland because of maintenance and a better approach."

Armstrong said she could support the idea of a self-fueling system, but recommended waiting until the budget was finished and the airport board had time to prioritize.

In other business, the council:

- Held the first reading of a new ordinance granting a franchise agreement to S&T Communication for a new telecommunication system. They also tabled a proposed franchise agreement until the ordinance became effective.

- Awarded a bid for a new parks department mower to Hi-Plains Implement, Colby, for a Grasshopper 721D with catcher for \$8,820.

- Approved new rates for electricity. Armstrong said customers will see an increase from

7-13 percent, depending on usage.

- Gave the mayor approval to sign a contract to purchase land for a new fire station, not to exceed \$28,500.

- Approved the final plat and annexation of an area south and east of Comfort Inn for a new truck stop by Woofter Construction. They also approved rezoning from residential to neighborhood commercial, because "all land comes into the city as residential" according to Mayor Warren Hixson.

- Heard an update from Gene Sicard, regional commissioner for American Youth Soccer, on the improvements to the soccer fields on Ninth Street. The group has spent about \$5,000 of donated money, plus a "lot of time" to improve the soccer fields. Hixson thanked Sicard for the organization's work with children.

Friday set for bank takeover

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

The First National Bank of Goodland will assume control of Commercial Federal Bank in Colby and Goodland effective Friday morning.

Larry McCants, president of the Goodland-based bank said today that the Commercial Federal Bank office in downtown Colby will be closed Friday, and employees will move to the First National Bank on South Range.

First National has 105 years of experience in Goodland and has expanded in the last 15 years to Colby, St. Francis, Sharon Springs, Quinter, and Kirk, Colo. It is an employee-owned bank with the majority of its stock held by its officers and staff, McCants said.

The future of the Commercial Federal's time and temperature sign on South Franklin is uncertain. However, McCants said the time and temperature might be retained, with a new sponsor identification.

Last week, Commercial Federal customers received welcome boxes that contained a three ring binder explaining First National's service and temporary checks with the customer's name on them.

McCants said the bank has been working on personalizing the checks, although it was only possible to get the primary account holders' names on them.

"We want the transition to be as smooth as possible," he said, "and if people have questions, they should contact Jon Eicher, branch manager, or one of the employees at the bank."

The tag line for the bank is "neighbors helping neighbors," McCants said, and that is what the bank and the people who work here believe.

"It's the reason why we have the local neighbors taken care of by the local people," he said. "What we are really interested in, is that the customers are not adversely affected."

Summer fun



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

Danyelle Mazanec made a 'firecracker' for the Fourth of July in Colby recreation arts and crafts class on Tuesday. The students used precut pieces and painted them red, white and blue. The class will meet every Tuesday for the summer in the Community Building at 10 a.m.

Higher electric rates explained

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Electric rates are going up after the Colby City Council approved an ordinance increasing prices from 7-13 percent Tuesday night.

City Manager Carolyn Armstrong said the increases were necessary to offset increased costs for fuel. Natural gas prices have gone up almost \$2 per unit, from \$3.44 last year to the new contract at \$5.25.



C. Armstrong

Armstrong told the council the increases were as low as possible and that she would continue to monitor the costs. Armstrong said the percentage increases were based on classification and usage. The largest industrial user in the city would see about a 13 percent increase. Residential customers would see a 7-8 percent rise and most commercial customers would see increases from 8-9 percent.

Leonard Delzeit, director of public power, said the increase on an average home using 850 kilowatt/hours would be about \$4.50 per month.

Councilman Eugene Wieland said there really wasn't much choice as he made the motion to approve the measure.

New foundation hires Donelan as director

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Thomas County Community Foundation board members decided to keep a local flavor when hiring an executive director, so they went with Becky Donelan.

Donelan began her duties on June 18. She previously worked for the Colby Community College Endowment association.

Donelan has lived in Thomas County since 1979, when her husband, John, returned to Colby to help run the Colby Supermarket, a family business.

She had helped set up a daycare facility in Beloit prior to moving back, so it seemed natural to work at the Pied Piper pre-school, which she did for 19



B. Donelan

years. Asked about long and short-term goals for the foundation, Donelan said her first priority was to finish raising the money for a \$300,000 matching grant.

"That money needs to be pledged by the end of the year," she said. The grant will allow the foundation to set up an endowment to pay operating expenses, making fund-raising easier.

Long term goals including educating people about the foundation's purpose and possibilities.

"I would like to establish permanent funds to allow new ideas to be implemented," she said.

Donelan said the foundation was continuing to raise funds and look for projects.

"We can be contacted at the office, 465-9152," she said. Donations may be mailed to P.O. Box 174, Colby, Kan. 67701. Donelan said she was excited by the challenge.

"There is a wealth of opportunity here," she said.

Colby musicians to celebrate first CD

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

An enthusiastic group of six musicians, with three members from Colby, recently released their first album, *Something To Be Desired*, containing 10 original songs written by one of the band members.



S. Cameron

The group's name, *Scott Cameron and the Western Dream*, features songs that will appeal to country fans both young and old, said Colbyite Cameron, 25, who is the lead singer and plays acoustic guitar.

"We are awfully excited about this new album," he said, "and the band has planned a special party and dance at the Jaycee Center this Saturday to promote our first CD."

Other Colby members of the band

include Rick Carter, drums, and Jeff Wagoner, piano and harmony. Band members, Randy Sauer, pedal steel and piano, and Mike Ferguson, lead guitar, are both from Hays with Mike Benish, Spearville, playing bass and songwriter.

Many of the original group started out as Hot Licks, a rock 'n roll band, but when Scott joined up in 1997, the type of music and the name both changed.

"The *Hot Licks* played mostly rock 'n roll," Scott said, "but today we are strictly country," he said.

For Scott and the other Colby band members, the love of music started early in their lives. "I enjoyed classical when I was very young," Scott said, "and then moved toward rock 'n roll, but I've come of age with country music."

Scott said he took his first guitar lessons from Jo Wolf when he was in the fifth grade and was in the vocal choir under Bill Blue's direction as a middle schooler.

Wolf said she remembers all three young Colby men very well. "Scott and Jeff both took lessons from me," she said. "They definitely showed promise and were diligent in practicing — more so than most of the other kids."

She said she also knew Rick, who bought some of his drum equipment from her at that time. "These were good kids and I am glad to see they are still playing music," she said.

Fieldstone Records in Hays recorded the group's first album and, according to Scott, all the tapings were done in a studio located in LaCrosse.

"It took about four months of working together to cut the CD," he said, "but for Mike (Benish) who wrote the songs used took many years."

Three of the songs, *Gonna Have To Rain*, *I Know You Better Than That* and *Love is Bad For Business*, will soon be released as singles, Scott said.

Scott is inviting everyone to join in the celebration at the Jaycee Center in Colby anytime from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Saturday.

Briefly

Weather: Heat moving in

Back in the 90s by the weekend. That's the forecast for the Colby area issued this morning by the National Weather Service. Tonight, mostly cloudy skies, a 30 percent chance for thunderstorms, low around 50 and light and variable winds. Thursday, mostly sunny, high 75-80 and east winds 5-15 mph. Thursday night, clear, low 50-55. Friday, mostly sunny, high in the middle 80s. And a peek at Saturday and Sunday, low 55-65 and high 90-95. Colby's high Tuesday was 70 and the overnight low this morning was 55. There was no additional precipitation, leaving the month's total at 0.41 inches.

The records for June 20: 106 in 1988 and 42 in 1946. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Landfill hours change

Thomas County landfill hours are 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Friday; 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday; and 1-4 p.m. Sunday. The landfill will have more compost to give away in about three weeks.

Book sale starts Saturday

Pioneer Memorial Library's annual used book sale will begin on Saturday and conclude on Saturday, June 23. Prices will vary from full price on June 16 through June 18;

then 1/2 price on June 19 and 20; \$4 a box or bag-full on the June 21 and 22; and end with \$3 a box or bag-full on Saturday, June 23, said JoAnne Sunderman, librarian. Prices will range from \$5 to 10-cents and there will be selected items such as older encyclopedia sets available for bid. Sunderman urges everyone not to miss out on this great opportunity to get some great buys. All proceeds will go to the library for the purchase of new books and other materials, and also special programming. For information, call 462-4470.

Colby youth dies at Denver hospital

JR Mattson, 22, Colby, died Tuesday night at Swedish Hospital in Englewood, Colo., from injuries he suffered after falling in a grain bin Thursday.

The accident occurred at the family-run business, located six miles west of Colby. According to officials, Mattson, along with his brothers, was repairing one of the bins, and during that process, JR fell.

Funeral services are pending with Harrison Chapel in Colby. Service times and other details will appear in Thursday's Free Press.

