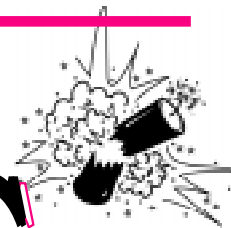




8 pages

# COLBY FREE PRESS



Tuesday

July 3, 2001

50¢

Volume 112, Number 130  
Serving Thomas County since 1888



## Tornado siren concerns brought to commissioners

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

Jeff Griffin, who lives at 175 N. Court Avenue brought several concerns to the Thomas County Commissioners at their Monday meeting. One in particular dealt with the tornado siren.

He said the siren which is close to his house, is so loud it breaks his windows. He requested the siren be moved because it not only breaks windows, but he has a 2-month old baby and is concerned about the decibel level.

Furthermore, he said his house and the siren are at the end of the power line, and the electricity often goes off during a high wind, leaving his house and the siren without power.

He suggested the county move the siren to the impound lot, and power it from the county generator which will kick in if the power goes off.

John Lygeros, Emergency Preparedness director, said the siren could possibly be raised on a higher pole, which would increase coverage and re-direct the sound. He said he did not think the county generator would support the siren. The commissioners told him to find out and report back.

Griffin also wanted to know who owned a 12 by 14 foot cinder block building next to the siren, which is ready to fall down. The neighborhood children play in there and he is afraid someone will get hurt. At one time, the building would have belonged to the railroad, but the line has been abandoned and no one claims responsibility for the shack. The commissioners said they would investigate.

The commissioners also spoke with

road supervisor Chris Bieker and Charles Schwanke concerning the tar blobs on the county parking lot which are getting on tires and people's shoes. Schwanke said he has a business which provides a coal tar emulsion sealer that is a protectant sealant for parking lots.

Schwanke had bid \$2,900 to seal the lot, however this does not include the cost of removing the tar blobs. He said the excess tar, which has been used to seal the cracks in the lot, will have to be removed using a heat process. He will do a few feet to see just what is needed, and then make a bid for that process.

The commissioners said they could either use the coal tar sealer, or pay \$20,000 to have Bieker do a complete overlay. Schwanke said the sealer had a three-year life expectancy, depending on traffic. He is on the agenda at 1:30 p.m. next Monday for further discussion.

In other business:

• Bieker said the city of Gem wants the county to seal a street, and wants to buy 5,000 yards of gravel. The commissioners told him to sell gravel to them for what it costs the county to produce. Gem will provide transportation.

• Household hazardous waste director Sandra Swob said the recent collection was successful. They took in 515 pounds of chemicals, and close to 500 gallons of paint from 40 participants. She reminded the county has free paint to give away which was collected. The paint is mixed together and turns out in

See "COUNTY," Page 5

## Going to the dogs



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

Sally Tibbles enjoyed meeting some new friends at City Hall this morning. The eight new puppies belong to J.L. Ellis and he was showing them off to friends. According to Tibbles, they would be great, "if they just stayed this size."

## Board officers in place; bids okayed for various projects

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees re-elected Kenton Krehbiel as chairman, Cleona Flipse as vice-chairman and the institution's president, Dr. Mikel Ary, as secretary/treasurer for 2001-02 at Monday evening's meeting.

Curt Stephens, who replaced Chuck Moore on the board, was elected treasurer, and ex-officio member to the Endowment Association.

Don Kready was elected representative to the Kansas Association of Community College Trustees.

The board approved all the banks of Thomas County as depositories of college money, and approved authorized signatures. The law firm of Starkey and Gatz was retained for legal services.

The transfer of \$4,383.42 from the employee

benefit fund and \$10,291.65 from the insurance fund to the general fund was approved, since Senate Bill 345 eliminated those funds. They were put them under the general fund.

In other business:

• The board approved a contract for Nikol Scheuerman (pronounced Charmin) to replace Candy Cook as a recruiter. Scheuerman is a graduate of Kansas State University, and a native of Scott City.

• Ary presented bids on a number of projects.

Sierra Sandblasting and Painting of Colby bid \$13,106 to clean and paint the ceiling of the swimming pool area, and to sandblast and epoxy the pool was accepted. Pro-Maintenance bid \$34,140. The pool will be drained and closed. Time frame is July 15-Aug. 15, in order to have the pool open when school starts again.

Ary said concrete work was needed in four

areas, potholes in the student union driveway, the library driveway, the animal health entry driveway, and a sidewalk north of Thomas Hall where a fence and bush had been removed. The bid went to Hutfles Construction \$26,218, beating out Marv Wilson for \$30,940, and Stephens Construction for \$38,012. All bidders were from Colby.

See "COLLEGE," Page 5

## Emergency room issue is still unresolved

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

The board of directors at Citizens Medical Center decided one month ago to bring in outside physicians to staff its emergency room, but as of today, no formal contract has been made either with local doctors or with an outside agency.

Following the board's original decision last month to go with the change, it then voted to put the issue on hold at a recent meeting and try negotiating with local doctors, said Michael Boyles, chief executive officer of Citizens Medical Center, Inc.

"The hospital board wants to provide what's best for the community," he said, "and so it set a direction toward outside services. But because of the closeness of this community, the board is looking at reconsidering and re-evaluating that direction."

One way hospital board members are reconsidering is with an extended addendum to the current contract held

by local physicians, he said.

"The board has more detailed requirements in that contract," Boyles said, "and extended an offer that some of the doctors have rejected in part, but we are still trying to look for some neutral ground (to make this work)."

Although he declined to talk about specifics in the contract, he did say two physicians signed the contract and three other doctors modified the contract from what the board presented.

"There are strict federal guidelines and regulations on emergency room care that doctors and hospitals must adhere to," he said.

One example is the Emergency Medical and Treatment Labor Act, which guides emergency room coverage, Boyles said.

"Basically it says that any emergency that comes in through the front door or the parking lot needs to have a medical screening examination to determine if the patient is or is not an emergency," he said. In the MedStaff

by-laws governing the hospital, a nurse can do screenings so that a physician wouldn't have to come in for all emergencies.

"However, that's putting a lot of pressure on the nurse and what if the nurse makes a mistake?," he said. "This is a tremendous concern by the staff," he said.

Another issue brought up was paying physicians above fair market value.

"If the feds were to come and evaluate us and say we were above fair market value, we could have some serious problems," he said. Under the current contract, Boyles said the physicians are paid weekdays one rate, with holidays and weekends at another rate.

"If a patient is admitted to the hospital from the emergency room, they won't pay extra for that care, but the physician on duty will bill for their work," he said. For Boyles, the question comes down to, "Are we paying fair market value?...Our physicians are among the highest paid in the area for

emergency room care with the exception of Hays where doctors make more, but they also have in-house (physician) coverage." The current contract with local doctors will expire on July 31, 2001 and of the patients that go to the emergency room about 20 percent of them see a nurse for screening; 26 percent see a mid-level (physician assistant); and about 50 percent see a doctor. The contract that was proposed to begin Aug. 1 with Staff Care, Inc., of Irving, Texas, would guarantee that 100 percent of the patients would be seen by a doctor.

"At this point, we don't have a formal contract either way," Boyles said, "and the board has really, really, been trying to come up with an addendum to the contract that protects the hospital and is also acceptable to the local physicians as well."

The hospital board will meet again Thursday, July 5, but it's uncertain whether or not any decision will be made on the emergency room contract.

## EPA plans public meeting next week on cleanup site

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

The Environmental Protection Agency will be holding a public meeting Monday at 7 p.m. in the Colby Community Building concerning amendments to plans for Ace Services Superfund site, 354 Convesse Avenue.

Ace Services operated a chrome plating facility from 1954-1990 at the site, according to agency officials. During that time, contaminated wastewater seeped into the ground and contaminated the groundwater.

Colby's city well no. 8 is near the site and the city has been unable to use that well because of the contamination.

After testing to determine the extent of the contamination, the agency has modified their plans to include

additional extraction wells, using ion exchange treatment for the ground water and provide a way to supply drinking water to affected residences, according to Hattie Thomas, agency spokesperson.

The new plan also proposes tear down and removal of the affected buildings at the Ace Services site, along with a new building to house the treatment units.

Total cost will be about \$5.1 million. "The purpose of the meeting is to present the plan and amend the record of decision for the plan," said Thomas. "We would also like to take public comments."

The 30-day comment period runs through July 27, 2001. Comments may be sent to Hattie Thomas, Office of External Programs, 901 N. Fifth Street, Kansas City, Mo. 66101.

## Briefly

### Weather: No change

Warm temperatures, thunderstorms and a little bit of wind are in store for the Colby area as far as the eye can see. Tonight, cloudy, a 50 percent chance for thunderstorms, locally heavy rain possible, lows 60-65 and south winds 10-20 mph becoming light late. Wednesday, July 4th, sunny, light winds turning southeast 10-20 mph, and highs at or above 95 degrees. Wednesday night, partly cloudy, a 20 percent chance for thunderstorms and lows 60-65. Thursday, thunderstorms likely, with the lows in the 60s and the highs in the 90s. Friday through Monday, don't look for any snow with highs in the 90s and lows in the 60s and thunderstorms lurking. Colby's high Monday was 96 and the overnight low this morning was 61, climbing to 74 by 8 a.m. The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is averaging 82 degrees. Precipitation remains at 0.10 inches. The records for July 3: 107 in 1934 and 44 in 1924. (The daily tempera-

tures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

### Fireworks illegal within city

Colby Police Chief Randy Jones is reminding people in town that it is illegal to explode fireworks within the city limits. During the past few days, he said, there have been many complaints called in at the law enforcement center regarding people using fireworks in various neighborhoods. For questions, call the police department at 462-4460.

### Local club plans fireworks display

The local Kiwanis Club will hold its annual fireworks display at 10:15 p.m., July 4, at the Thomas County fairgrounds. Main viewing area will be at the pits east of the race track. Everyone is invited to bring lawn chairs and blankets to the "biggest display yet," according to club of-

ficials. All individual fireworks are prohibited.

### Rexford to celebrate Fourth

The City of Rexford will dedicate their new playground equipment on the Fourth of July at the city park. Festivities will begin with a 6:30 p.m. dedication, followed by a free barbeque at 7 p.m. A fireworks display will conclude the activities at 9:15 p.m., city officials said.

### Nine-Run-Run planned in August

Now in its sixth year, the Thomas County Emergency Medical Services is again sponsoring its Nine-Run-Run beginning at 8 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 4 in Colby. Early registration is underway, said Kathy Wright, one of the organizers with openings in all age groups for the 10K and 5K run, 2K fun run and 2K walk. The cost of the event for

early registration is \$10 for walkers and \$13 for runners and after Monday, July 23, the cost will increase to \$12 and \$15 respectively, she said. All proceeds go to benefit the local service. To register, stop by the facility at 1245 S. Franklin or call any EMS member.

### No trash pickup Wednesday

The City of Colby Sanitation Department will not be operating on Wednesday, July 4, in observance of the national holiday. Wednesday's residential grass will be picked up on Thursday, July 5, along with the regular solid waste route, officials said today. For information, call 462-4410.

### Group needs officers

Colby Secondary Parent Teacher Student Association still need officers for the year 2001-2002. Call 462-7188.

