



COLBY FREE PRESS

Few even know it exists

Hospital, taxpayers benefit from program

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Thomas County residents, as well as those in the surrounding area, now have an opportunity to give a donation to Citizens Medical Center and at the same time receive a 70 percent tax credit back when filing state tax returns.

The Community Service Tax Credit program, which is an economic development arm of the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing, awarded \$4.1 million to 28 nonprofit organizations around the state.

Citizens Medical Center was one of the 28 to get a portion of the funding amounting to \$150,000 in tax credits for new construction in creating additional space and \$40,000 being applied toward new radiology equipment.

"This is the first tax credit grant coming to Thomas County since the program began in 1996," said Bill Acree, community development division of the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing.

"It's an incredible program," Acree said, "and since many people in Thomas County have never heard of this before, they might think it's too good to be true."

In explaining the way the grant works, Acree cited an example of a business donating \$10,000 to Colby hospital's project. Using the 70 percent tax credit, the business would receive \$7,000 of that donation back in tax credit.

Consequently, if a business owed the state close to that amount, Acree said, they would virtually wipe out their bill.

"The program is a way for donors to give back charitably to their communities rather than send the money to the state in the form of taxes owing," he said.

Another first with the tax credit program is that this year, the legislature changed the law to allow individuals

//

It's an incredible program...they might think it's too good to be true."

Bill Acree, community development
Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing

the opportunity to participate as well. Acree cautioned, however, that private donors might first speak with their financial advisor when considering this option. The minimum donation by an individual is set at \$250.

"In most cases, the individual donating will benefit," he said.

Tama Unger, fund development director for Citizens Foundation, which is the fund-raising side of Citizens Medical Center, said that during her first week on the job back in April she saw the grant information. After reviewing the grant application with Kevan Trenkle, chief financial officer at the hospital, it was decided to go ahead and try for the funding.

Of the 86 applications received requesting tax credit awards, Colby was among about one-third of those approved.

"It is such a pleasure to work in Thomas County," Unger said, "and to realize how many visionaries there are in this community."

According to Unger, the tax credits will generate \$214,285 in donations that will be used to for construction on the south side of the hospital to house additional diagnostic services such as MRIs, bone density testing, nuclear medicine, mammograms, CT scans and X-rays.

"These are very large pieces of equipment and requiring a lot of space," she said.

Michael Boyles, chief executive officer at Citizens Medical Center, is also pleased with the award and efforts of

the foundation.

"It tells me that Tama (and the foundation) is out there searching for things to benefit the facility and diagnostic services division," he said.

Along with Citizens Medical Center's grant award, other area organizations receiving tax credits included Oakley's Tri-County Amusement Association received \$35,000 in tax credits for building a concession stand and storage facility, along with additional lighting in the park area.

Norton County Hospital in Norton was awarded \$245,000 in tax credits for renovations of the emergency department, laboratory, radiology, nursing station and business/administration area. That project also includes upgrading heating and air conditioning, electrical system and accessibility issues.

Scott City Rest Home, Inc., was granted \$245,000 in tax credits for construction of assisted-living apartments next to the nursing home for citizens who do not require total nursing home care.

"These tax credit awards raise funds for very needed community projects," said Lt. Gov. and Secretary of the Commerce and Housing Department Gary Sherrer. "Many of these initiatives are unique, involving children and family services, and addressing the medical needs of rural Kansas."

The program had been operating at a \$5 million level, but with state budget cuts, Acree said, the program funding was cut by \$900,000.

Surprisingly good harvest reported

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

The Thomas County wheat harvest has been surprisingly good, according to area elevator operators and K-State extension agent Dennis Chandler in Colby. Most farmers have reported yields in the 40-45 bushel per acre range.

"Not too bad," said Nate Reid, manager of the Collingwood Elevator in Brewster. Reid said wheat coming into this elevator averaged about 59 pounds test weight with 12-13 percent moisture.

Ron Shaw, from Rexford Grain

Company, agreed, "It was pretty good, after it finally got over."

An unusual aspect of the harvest this year was that it began slowly, in spite of hot, dry temperatures. Roger Hale, harvest office manager, said it was the first "hot, slow harvest" he had seen.

Shaw added that the harvest began slowly, but picked up speed and finished quickly. Test weights in Rexford were around 60 pounds, with "good moisture."

On Wednesday, both Reid and Shaw thought the harvest was over, with only a few stragglers.

John Strecker, from Hi-Plains Co-

op, said, "We were very well pleased with harvest." Quality of wheat coming in to the Colby and Gem elevator ran from fair to excellent, Strecker reported. Test weights were in the 59-60 range.

"Overall, it was close to a normal harvest," said Strecker.

Chandler said, "It was a lot better than expected." With the late planting and lack of moisture, many farmers expected a much worse outcome. Chandler said he didn't have any figures on how Thomas County had fared when compared to the state, yet.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Max Pickerill, chemistry professor at Colby Community College, talked with friend and colleague, Roger Hale (middle), who retired from the college after 35 years. Seated next to Hale is Dr. Mikel Ary, president of the college.

Hale hailed at special event

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Roger Hale, who taught psychology at Colby Community College for 35 years, is retiring this summer and on Wednesday night he, along with four other instructors were honored at a special picnic.

Hale talked about the early years of the college. "For the first two years," he said, "we were in the old hotel in downtown Colby."

He said he started teaching classes at 8 a.m. and his last class, three days a week, would begin at 8 p.m.

"We never worked as hard as we did during that first two years," he said.

The college moved to its present location in 1966 and Hale remembers that it was truly a community effort.

"I remember Chuck Schiefen and I putting together student desks in Thomas Hall and Mrs. Tangeman and Mrs. Mosier pitching in," he said.

In those early days, Hale said he taught in the weight room and his desk was a stool which held his open briefcase.

Along with teaching psychology, Hale also taught human growth and development, sociology and a variety of evening and weekend seminars. Serving as a counselor in student services for 20 years, he also served as chairman for behavioral sciences.

"During my tenure," he said, "I taught 17,399 students in 823 sections of behavioral science classes."

He has seen three generations from one family in his classrooms and when one of his first students is retiring, Hale said he thinks maybe it's time for him to do the same.

Although Hale is retiring from full-time teaching, he

said he is considering teaching part-time next fall. Another reason for his retirement, is due to health reasons, he said.

"Colleges do not replace a Roger Hale," said Dr. Mikel Ary, president of Colby College. "They find new people to teach their classes, but not individuals who are so ingrained and synonymous with the school."

Ary added that he wishes Hale the best and considers him to be a great professional as well as a close friend.

"Friends ask me if I plan to stay in Colby," Hale said, "and I tell them that my friends are all here."

One thing Hale said he would like to do is travel and be a tour guide if his health allows.

Hale's son, Ryan, is currently the manager of Colorado Bicycling Adventures in Estes Park. His daughter, Dana, is a medical assistant at Scottsdale Family Health in Scottsdale, Ariz.

In addition to Hale, Gary and Sue Webb, Darci Wederski and Ken Mitchell were also recognized at the event. Gary served as the director of the college's horse program and his wife, Sue, was the instructional and curriculum director, according to Deb Schwanke, public information officer. The couple will be leaving the Colby area after having been with the college since 1990.

Wederski started working at the college in January of 1993 as director of the student health department, supervising clinicals in the practical nursing program.

Mitchell, who taught art at the college for about 20 years, has been commissioned to paint a mural in Bedker Memorial Complex.

More than 150 people attended the Wednesday picnic in the student union at the college.

Charges pending against trio

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Investigations by the Thomas and Logan County sheriffs, Colby and Oakley police departments and the Kansas Highway Patrol have resulted in three suspects being held in the Thomas County Jail pending charges of possession of methamphetamine, according to Sheriff Tom Jones.

Jones said Arthur Joseph Mickey, Sr., 38, Alta Vista and Jerome Lee Kruse, 36, Oakley are being held for Logan County after being arrested Wednesday.

The other suspect, Garth Lee

Kruse, also 36 and from Oakley, was arrested by Thomas County officers north of Oakley Wednesday morning.

Thomas County Deputy Jim Engel said officers executed a search warrant at 395 U.S. 83, in Thomas County north of Oakley, at 8:40 a.m. Wednesday.

"We found items that led us to believe an outbuilding was being used to manufacture methamphetamine," said Engel.

Neither Oakley Police Chief Danny Shanks nor Logan County Attorney Doug Spencer returned calls.

2001 wheat crop pegged at 327.6 million bushels

WICHITA (AP)—Buoyed by a better than expected harvest, the 2001 Kansas wheat crop was officially pegged at 327.6 million bushels, Kansas Agricultural Statistics Service said Wednesday.

The agency's June forecast for the state's winter wheat crop was up 15 percent from just a month ago, but still 6 percent below last year's crop, officials reported.

But the latest government forecast spells good news for Kansas producers who had been bracing for an awful harvest after dusting in their crops last year's drought dragged into fall planting season for winter wheat, followed by a cold winter.

"For as much abandonment as we had, it is an excellent harvest. Yields were a lot better," said Brett Myers, executive vice president of the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers.

"For what we had in early spring, it turned out to be a very, very good harvest."

Kansas farmers abandoned 1.5 million acres of wheat this spring — harvesting just 8.4 million acres this year of the 9.9 million acres planted.

That is among the fewest harvested wheat acres in the last 70 years: only in 1933, 1935 and 1957 did the number of acres drop lower, said Eddie Wells, KASS statistician.

The more optimistic overall crop

estimate for the 2001 harvest comes from the much better crop yields. KASS said the average yield for the state this year was 39 bushels per acre.

That is not only 5 bushels an acre more than the agency was anticipating only a month ago, but is even better than the 37 bushel-per-acre yield last year.

Since 1916 — when KASS started keeping such records — only six other years have seen yields so high.

Timely rains in May helped the remaining stands of Kansas wheat not yet abandoned and replanted to spring crops to recover across much of the state.

The report is based on conditions in

Kansas as of July 1, when the Kansas wheat harvest was 78 percent complete.

Nationwide, this year's wheat crop is forecast at 1.37 billion bushels, 3 percent higher than USDA expected last month but 13 percent below last year's production.

Because of the higher production, the department lowered its projected price for wheat by 5 cents to \$3 a bushel, still well above last year's average of \$2.62.

Kansas growers planted 20.2 million acres to the four major crops: wheat, sorghum, corn and soybeans — 3 percent more acres than a year ago, KASS said.

Briefly

Weather: Made for July

Upper 80s to lower 90s, thunderstorms, partly cloudy, winds east-southeast 5-15 mph and lows in the middle 60s constitute the Colby region's weather now through Sunday. Wednesday's high was 90 and the overnight low this morning was 64. Precipitation from the thunderstorm during the night amounted to 0.07 inches, bringing the month's total to 0.30 inches. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 89 degrees. The records for July 12: 106 in 1954 and 47 in 1975. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Blood drive planned in Colby

Colby will be hosting a blood drive, Thursday, July 26, from 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the American Legion, 1850 W. 4th St. In order to give blood, said Donna Finley, director of the Thomas County Red Cross, a person must be in generally good health, at least 17 years of age and weigh 110 pounds or more. To schedule an appointment or for information, call toll-free (888) 719-8929 or locally at (785) 462-7161.

Jaycees plan beach party

The Colby Jaycees are planning a "beach party" begin-

ning at 2 p.m., Saturday, complete with sand volleyball at the Jaycee Center, west of Colby Animal Clinic on E. 4th St. According to organizers, there will be games all day, a stock tank for children, horse shoes and "goofy" golf. The cost is \$10 adults and \$5 children with a buffet style meal included in the price. For information, call Lori Haberer at 462-6557. All proceeds go toward community betterment.

Fair board meets today

The Thomas County Free Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m. today, at the 4-H Building at the fairgrounds to make arrangements for the fair which runs from July 30-Aug. 3.

The meeting is open to the public.

College pool remains closed

The Colby Community College swimming pool is closed for repairs and renovation. According to Kipp Nelson, pool manager, the pool will remain closed until mid-August.

Bowhunters plan shoot Sunday

There will be an archery shoot on Sunday, July 15, beginning at 1 p.m. at the range, organizers said. Anyone interested in attending is welcome. The range is located one-quarter mile north of town on Franklin Ave.

