



COLBY FREE PRESS

12 pages

Airport to get lighting

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

The Colby City Council had no more than approved a contract for Jims' Electric, Colby, to install new airport lights than the first change order, a request to install runway end intensity lights for an additional \$16,700 was presented and voted down, for the time being.

The lights were not part of the original \$180,000 project, but were requested by Eagle Med Aviation, an air ambulance company from Wichita, when they were looking at Colby as a possible site for a permanent base.

Eagle Med chose Goodland, but they recommended both the runway end lights and a global position indicator to make landings easier in inclement weather.

"The end lights are strobes that help pilots see the end of the runway," Armstrong said, adding that she understood pilots weren't allowed to land if they couldn't see the runway's end.

The global positioning unit would increase the cost of the addition to \$27,000 and Armstrong said the airport board had recommended waiting until next year, when they could apply for grant money.

Armstrong told the board she concurred with their recommendation and the board voted to wait.

Governor gets involved in foster care

TOPEKA (AP) — Gov. Bill Graves says he will get involved with the lingering financial problems plaguing the state's privatized foster care system.

Graves said earlier this week that he would visit with charities contracted with the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services to provide foster care and adoption services.

"My interest in doing that is to help them be more successful," Graves said.

The governor said the system is providing quality care for children, but that it is plagued by problems with contract management.

Further, the state has an obligation to help foster care providers because of the limited number of potential contractors, he said.

"I thought that was the most significant thing to come out of today's meeting," said Rep. Brenda Landwehr, R-Wichita and chairwoman of the interim Committee of Children's Issues.

House Minority Leader Jim Garner, D-Coffeyville, said Graves had taken the first step "in recognizing there is a problem."



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Casey Quagliano, center, lent a hand to his brother Nathan, right, and Austin Plumisto as they put up a tent for the largest slumber party in Thomas County, the American Cancer Society Relay for Life. Others helping with the registration tent and concessions Thursday night were Bob and Shirley Coleman, Brian and Debbie Quagliano, Chuck Plumisto, Dale Plumisto, Kent Dible and his son Bradley.

Relay for Life begins tonight

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Activities for this year's Thomas County Relay for Life will begin at 7 p.m., tonight, at Dennen Field with the opening ceremony at 7 p.m., followed by the survivors' victory lap, according to Debbie Quagliano, one of the organizers.

During the opening ceremony, she said, the Colby Boy Scouts will raise the American flag and Joyce Armstrong, of Goodland, will sing the National Anthem. The speaker will be Julie Brush, of Downs, who is the Northwest Kansas Relay co-

ordinator, she said.

"Although our team participation is lower this year," Quagliano said on Thursday, "we are still hoping that many people attend the event either to walk laps or donate to this worthy cause." Throughout the evening, there will be entertainment, food vendors, and other activities such as football, volleyball and frisbee, she said.

In addition, Classic Karaoke with Beth Craft, will be on hand, along with Colby Police Officer Scott Sitton and his K-9, Capone, providing demonstrations. Sitton is expected to arrive follow-

ing the luminary service, which will begin around 9:30 p.m., she said.

One of the highlights at the Relay for Life event, Quagliano said, is the luminary service, which honors those who are still fighting and those who lost the battle with cancer.

During the service, names of both the living and deceased will be read and the candles will be lit.

The relay will continue until 10 a.m. Saturday, with a closing ceremony and cleanup.

"We encourage everyone to stop by and take part in this fundraising event," Quagliano said.

Colby graduate serves on prestigious commission

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Colby graduate Mark Hansen was one of the project coordinators for the National Commission on Election Reform,

a blue-ribbon panel selected to look at the election process in America after the 2000 presidential election fiasco.

The commission returned their report to President Bush.

Hansen, a 1977 Colby High School

graduate, was tapped to be the project coordinator for the task force on the Federal Election System.

"I was called by Phillip Zelikon, the director of the Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia," he said. Hansen was selected for the post based on his writings on voter turnout.

The commission delivered their report to President Bush in a Rose Garden ceremony at the White House on July 31. Members of congress also received a report on the findings.

Among other things, the commission found that many eligible voters had been turned away because poll workers could not find their names on lists of eligible voters. They also found

that the majority of election workers were volunteers and scant money was spent on election administration.

One of the most telling items was the discovery that very few polling places were ready to deal with the recounts and administrative functions of a close election such as the 2000 presidential race.

Hansen was a professor of political science at the University of Chicago when he was called up to work on the commission, but has since accepted a post as government professor at Harvard University.

"They wanted someone who would be comfortable with social scientists and historians," he added.

The University of Kansas graduate

Leads dwindle

Fugitives remain free in manhunt

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

A Colby teen-ager spent a terrifying half-hour in the hands of two fugitives when she returned to her rural home Thursday to find the couple had broken in while eluding police.

The girl, who asked that her name not be used, said the man held a steak knife to her throat at one point and the couple seemed to think the police knew where they were.

The phone continued ringing, as it turns out, from friends trying to warn the family about the fugitives, but the couple wouldn't let her answer.

"She (the woman) seemed like she didn't want anything to do with it," said the girl. "He was real erratic and seemed scared."

After about a half-hour, the couple tied the girl up, changed clothes and took her 1998 Ford Escort and some checks.

Within seconds, she freed herself and called 911.

That call was the first good clue officers had in the search.

Shortly after the call led officers to that area, a private plane used in the search spotted the Mazda pickup near the farmstead south of Colby.

Thomas County Sheriff Tom Jones said a Colby officer helping with the search was at the home before she hung up.

"She was very scared, but she kept her head," said Jones. "She did the right thing."

The couple is believed to have made their way to Colby, where they apparently left the girl's car and stole a 1991 white Jeep Cherokee from the Hoxie Grain Co. that evening.

According to the Sheridan County sheriff's office, the Jeep, with Sheridan County license number ION-370, was last seen at 8 p.m. when employees left the elevator.

It was reported missing at 8:30 a.m. Thursday when employees discovered the girl's Escort parked in its place.

Sheriff Jim Johnson speculated the suspects hid out in a rural area of Sheridan or Thomas County until Wednesday night.

The chase started on the west on-ramp of I-70 from Range Avenue in Colby when Thomas County Sheriff's Deputy Ken Patton stopped a Mazda pickup that looked like one reported to be involved in a gas skip in Grinnell.

The driver, a slightly built man in his 20s, denied involvement, but drove away when Patton asked him to step out of the car.

After a short chase, the suspects left the road and crashed through a fence, driving cross country.

Patton, other deputies and Colby police officers lost sight of the vehicle and began a search of the area, assisted by the Kansas Highway Patrol and a private aircraft.

Jones said police still had no idea who the couple were.

They were described as in their mid-20s, the man is clean cut and shaven, with medium length brown-blond hair.

He has tattoos on his neck that resemble oriental writing. He is about 5 foot, 6 inches tall and weighs 135-140 pounds.

The girls is also in her mid-20s, with freckles and reddish hair. She is slightly built and didn't wear any makeup.

"We're running down a few more leads," Jones said, "and we'll all get together this afternoon and decide where to go."

The Kansas Bureau of Investigation was processing the vehicles in hopes of finding a lead as to the identity of the fugitives, but Jones admits clues are few.

"We'd sure like to catch them before they do this somewhere else," he said.

Descriptions of the couple and the vehicle have been sent to police agencies around the country.

"I'm just glad it's over," said the teen-ager. "I'm thankful no one was hurt and I hope they catch them soon."

Starting young



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

LaDonna Dempewolf (not pictured) and her daughter, Lauren, 3, looked at lots of jewelry while shopping downtown during Thursday's "Krazy Daze" sidewalk sale. Steve Dempewolf, Lauren's dad, said he thought it was a great idea to have this type of event during the evening. See page 7 for more pictures and story of the event.

Briefly

Weather: Possible thunderstorms

Tonight is calling for lows in the 50s under partly cloudy skies. Winds will be from the southeast at 5 to 15 mph. Saturday, partly sunny, highs in the 80s with a 20 percent chance of thunderstorms in the evening with lows in the 50s. On Sunday, partly cloudy and warmer with temperatures reaching the low 90s. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

College board meets Monday

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees will meet at 5 p.m. Monday in the Thomas Hall Administration Building. The budget hearing is the first item on the agenda. Refunding of money for Certificates of Participation will be discussed. Vehicle bids will be opened. Resignations and contracts will be approved. The board is expected to go into closed session to discuss negotiations. The board will also discuss any other item any member wishes to discuss. The meeting is open to the public.

Commissioners to meet

The Thomas County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday in the commissioners room of the courthouse. Landfill Supervisor Larry Jumper will talk about recycling concrete at 9 a.m. Register of Deeds Denny Burke will talk about personnel at 9:30 a.m. Brian Staats of Adams, Brown, Berean and Ball Chartered is on the agenda at 10 a.m. All meetings are open to the public and input is appreciated.

Pool hours change

The Colby Municipal Swimming Pool hours have changed effective today, officials said. The pool will be open from 1 to 4 p.m. from now until Wednesday, Aug. 15. After that day, the pool will close for the season.

Open House planned Tuesday

Wings Upon the Prairie, Inc., 1980 West 4th, will have a grand opening from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Aug. 14. The ribbon cutting will be at 10 a.m. This is a consumer-run organization, a nonprofit organization for people with severe mental health problems, which provides a drop-in center where consumers can come for recreation, visiting and peer counseling, according to George Aumiller, president. The organization is sponsored by the Kansas SRS Department of Mental Health and the Self-Help Network of Kansas.

Youth group to sell peaches

Colby's Sacred Heart CYO will be selling Colorado free-stone peaches at various locations in Thomas County beginning Friday, Aug. 10. Organizers said these peaches are "extremely delicious" and are being sold for \$22 for 22 lbs. or smaller quantities are available. The peaches will go on sale at the Relay for Life at Dennen Field, Friday, Aug. 11, from 7 to 10 p.m.; at the Thomas County Office Complex, 350S. Range, Colby, beginning at 8 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 11; and also at locations in Selden, Brewster and Rexford from 8 a.m. to noon, and Levant from 8 to 10 a.m., also on Saturday. For details, call Paul or Marilyn Bailey, 462-7356.

