

COLBY FREE PRESS



8 pages

Trash tunnel



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Motorists driving by on Fourth and Franklin have been noticing the work going on at True Value Hardware, but many weren't sure what exactly the purpose of the huge tube is. The tube, which is known as a "trash shoot," said Fred Haines, co-owner of Roofmasters Roofing, Inc., is used for the most part on taller buildings. "We are putting on a new modified asphalt roof at the business and as the workers tear out the old roof, they send the pieces down the shoot and into the truck below." The project started on Monday and will continue through part of next week. Pictured brooming up some of the debris is George Smollock, foreman of the project.

Questions abound as plans unfold for viaduct removal

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

Steve Rocker, Kansas Department of Transportation project manager for the K-25 viaduct removal, scheduled for 2003, said at a meeting of Colby officials this morning that the plans were about 50 percent complete.

"We are doing the field check," he said. "This is where we check with the folks who build the projects."

In addition to state and city officials, representatives from Kyle Railroad, whose tracks the viaduct covers, and Thomas County's road supervisor Chris Bieker were on hand.

The plan, although the viaduct will be removed, eliminates the need for 17 properties to be condemned for right-of-way and is much less expensive than

a new viaduct, according to Rocker. Rocker said the plans called for a detour off K-25 onto Veteran's Memorial Drive to Country Club Drive and then south to I-70.

Although the county will be doing some grading and the state will put an overlay on the gravel portions, Bieker and city police chief Randy Jones had some questions for planners.

"What about Fourth and Country Club?" Jones asked. The intersection is where one of three major north-south arteries intersect with Fourth Street, which is U.S. 24.

Jones said it was the only one of the three without traffic lights. Chris Meyer, from the state, thought traffic lights might create more problems. City councilman John Bremenkamp

replied, "It's a son-of-a-gun right now!"

Rocker said the question would be added to the planning.

Bieker wanted to know about trucks meeting at the intersections.

Both intersections on Veteran's Memorial Drive are too narrow for trucks to meet, he said.

Meyer and Rocker said there wasn't much they could do, but they would try to increase the radius when they did the overlay.

Jerry DeWitt from Kyle Railroad asked about speed limits on the highway after the project was finished.

"Most of our accidents occur when a car hits the train," he said.

DeWitt said high traffic speeds were one of the causes.

Rocker said the speed limits would remain close to the present, but a study would be done after the work.

"It doesn't make much sense to do a study until the work is done with this much change," he said.

Rocker and railroad officials also told the group they would look into provisions for pedestrian and bicycle traffic coming into town after questions were raised about early morning walkers and riders.

Rocker said it could be done, but that he gets "a little nervous about putting a sidewalk on a railroad track."

The plans will go back to the state for further review and modification, Rocker said.

Legal descriptions should be ready in the next 30 days, he said.

College volunteers are calling all over country

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Alumni, students, faculty, administrative staff and friends of Colby Community College are continuing to make calls this week all over the country as part of the annual Endowment Association's phonathon. College officials said the event kicked off on Sunday and will end tonight at 9:30.

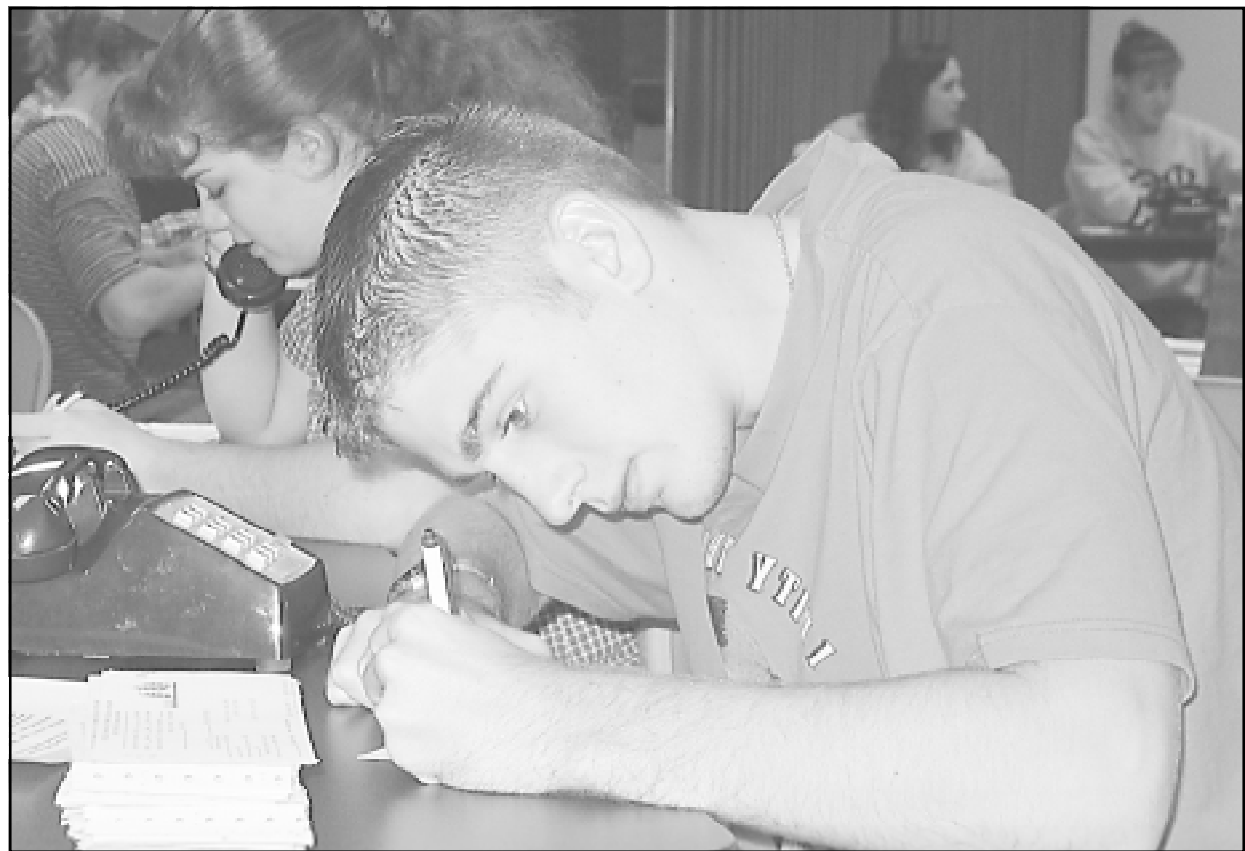
During Phonathon 2001, which is the endowment association's largest fund-raiser, volunteers call alumni and supporters asking for pledges toward the scholarship fund, said Debbie Schwanke, public information director at the college.

The money raised, she said, goes directly to the students in the form of scholarships. Over one-half of the students receive scholarships.

"This is an all-volunteer effort that directly serves our students," said Dr. Mikel Ary, president of the college.

"Hundreds of students benefit from the generosity of our phonathon contributors and we attribute the success of many of our students in large part to academic or technical scholarship assistance provided by the endowment association," he said.

Last year's total contributions were more than \$50,000, with this year's goal to top last year's figure.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Cody Poell (foreground), Hoxie, and Elizabeth Codner, Gove, both sophomores at Colby Community College, are among students making telephone calls this week during the college endowment association's annual phonathon. Dr. Mikel Ary, college president, said the phonathon had reached nearly \$30,000 in pledges as of Tuesday night.

Postal repair service facility at Topeka is forced to send workforce home

TOPEKA (AP) — Officials sent 175 people home Tuesday from a U.S. Postal Service repair facility that received equipment from East Coast mail centers involved in anthrax cases.

Some of the machinery came from the Brentwood mail center in Washington, D.C., and from facilities in New Jersey and Florida where letters containing anthrax spores had been handled, said Dr. Larry Rumans, the

Shawnee County health officer.

He said the U.S. Postal Service Central Repairs Facility was closed as a precaution because of what he referred to as a credible potential exposure. He said no anthrax spores had been found on the site, a large building in an industrial warehouse complex near the Forbes Field airport on the city's south side. It was not known how long the building would be closed.

Rumans said the people working in the building, employed either by the postal service or a private contractor, ASI Inc., had all been encouraged to contact either their own doctors or the county health department to begin precautionary treatment with antibiotics.

He said 10 or 11 of the people had exhibited flu-like symptoms.

Dr. Gianfranco Pezzino, the state epidemiologist, said his department

has received many calls from people around Kansas expressing concern that they might have been exposed to anthrax, but no cases have been confirmed.

"This is the one that looks more serious," he said.

State health officials have conducted tests and said they don't expect results for 24 to 72 hours.

Meanwhile, Sen. Sam Brownback,

R-Kan., issued a statement through his spokesman Erik Hotmire, expressing his concern about the employees at the facility.

"I am following the situation very closely," Brownback said. "The full force of the federal government, including the Centers for Disease Control and other means of support will be there for these employees if and when they need it."

Rumans said health officials did not know how long equipment from the three postal facilities had been at the repair center, but that it arrived after Sept. 11. He said he did not know what form of transportation was used to get the equipment to Topeka.

Rumans said he believed about 70 percent of the nation's mail-handling equipment is sent to Topeka when it needs repair.

Fall harvest brings mixed bounty for farmers, thanks to summer's heat

WICHITA (AP) — As fall harvest nears its end, Kansas farmers are bringing in a mixed bounty in the wake of this summer's extreme heat.

Hardest hit were farmers in south-central Kansas, where seemingly unending days of triple-digit temperatures and little rain in June and July devastated much of the corn, milo and soybeans, industry experts say.

But in northeast Kansas and the northern tier counties of the state, the harvest has been very generous.

"It is a much better year for most people in Kansas ... a few more people have a few more smiles on their faces," said Dennis Morrice, executive director of the Kansas Soybean Association.

The October government forecast for the

state's soybean crop was pegged at 87 million bushels.

That falls closely to the estimate released this week by William Tierney, agricultural economist at Kansas State University.

In his last forecast of the season, Tierney pegged this year's soybean crop in Kansas at 86 million bushels, about 36 million bushels more than last year's drought-damaged crop.

The northeast parts of the state had abundant, timely rains — and the soybeans there are showing it: yields of 60-plus bushels an acre on mostly dryland acres are common, Morrice said. Southeast Kansas got rains in mid and late August that helped crops there, and while some areas are still a week away from much of their soybean harvest, those already harvested are coming in at a decent 40-bushel range for them,

he said.

This season, the heat wave hit Kansas two weeks earlier than last year — striking corn crops at a critical time in their development. But widespread rains in mid-August saved the state's soybean crop in most areas other than south-central Kansas.

"It was a very critical rain, and it came at a very critical point in time," Morrice said.

Briefly

Weather: Less wind

Hold on, the winds will be subsiding tonight, the National Weather Service said in its mid-morning forecast today. Tonight, clear, northwest winds 15-25 mph, decreasing to 5-15 mph late, lows around 25. Thursday, sunny, highs 55-60 and northwest winds 10-20 mph. Thursday night, clear, lows around 25. Friday, sunny, highs near 60, Saturday, partly cloudy, lows 30-35 and highs 65-70 and Sunday, partly cloudy, lows in the middle 30s and highs near 70. Colby's high Tuesday was 80 and the overnight low this morning was 35. Precipitation remains at 0.45 inches for the month. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 58 degrees. The records for Oct. 24: 86 in 1921 and 19 in 1980. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Treasurer's office closes until 1 p.m.

The Thomas County Treasurer's office will be closed

until 1 p.m. on Thursday so that employees can attend Neva Volk's funeral, said Donita Applebury, treasurer. For questions, call 462-4520.

Diabetes program Friday

Citizens Medical Center and the Golden Plains Chapter of the American Diabetes Association will host a community education program on diabetes by Dr. Richard Guthrie at 5 p.m., Friday, in the Citizens Medical Center Specialty Clinic, 100E. College Drive. The program is free and open to the public. For information, call Jeanene Brown at (785)-462-4850.

Drug awareness workshop planned

A drug awareness workshop will be held from 5 to 7 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 28, at the Colby United Methodist Church. The workshop, said Doug Finley, organizer, will feature speakers familiar with alcohol and drug abuse. The workshop is in conjunction with Drug Free Awareness programs,

he said. The event is open to everyone. For information or questions, call Pastor Jim Mardock, 462-2761, or Finley at 465-5300.

Fire department to check detectors

The Colby Fire Department will be assisting people in Colby on Saturday, Oct. 27, change out smoke alarm batteries, inspect equipment, or even purchase alarms. Rick Dickman, assistant fire chief, said today that those wanting to have their alarms checked, should call 462-4454 to make an appointment. "If Saturday does not work for someone, we will schedule a more convenient time too," he said.

Students to rake leaves

The Colby High School Service Club is planning a community-wide fall leaves clean-up day beginning the first weekend of October and continuing through until the second weekend of November, said Roni Dietz, adult advisor. "Residents interested in having students rake their yards

are asked to call the school at 465-5300 and leave name, address and telephone number on my voice mail." This is one of community service projects the club is involved in, she said.

Kready Bunch performs Saturday

A family barbershop quartet show, The Kready Bunch, is planned for Saturday, Oct. 27, at two locations. The first will be at Quinter High School in Quinter beginning at 2 p.m., followed by a second performance at Colby High School's auditorium starting at 7:30 p.m.

Holiday items needed for sale

Citizens Medical Center Auxiliary is planning its second annual recycled holiday sales and is looking for donations of new or good used holiday items, said Carolyn Miller, one of the organizers. Donations can be left at 545 Woolfer Ave. between Saturday, Oct. 27 and Thursday, Nov. 1. For those with questions call 462-7777 or 462-6898.

