

COLBY PRESS

50¢

Volume 112, Number 01 Serving Thomas County since 1888

Sheriff frustrated by squabbling of tow truckers

By MAXINE NELSON

6 pages

Colby Free Press Christmas day was "slick, dangerous and bloody," according to Thomas County Sheriff Tom Jones, reporting Friday morning to the county commissioners. Jones was referring to a series of accidents caused by slick roads.

Jones reported problems with tow truck drivers vying for vehicles to be towed, instead of waiting their turn. According to Jones, there was "a row of tow trucks in the median," waiting to tow away accident victims, and one wrecker driver "drove 80 miles per then pulled the keys out of a car so he would get the tow.

However, he did not get that tow, as the deputy working the wreck told him he had not been called, and could not tow that vehicle.

The county calls tow trucks on a nonpreferential basis, in order. The city, however, allows the officers working the case to call whichever wrecker they prefer, adding to the confusion.

Jones said he would like for the commissioners to meet with the tow truck drivers, but the commissioners replied they had met with the drivers in the past and decided to call them on a non-preferential basis, and nothing had changed

Jones said the sheriff's department has been getting bogus phone calls requesting a wrecker, and when the tow truck and deputy get there, there is no one at the address. He said if they could prove who was doing it, they would be

The commissioners asked if he had Caller ID and when told the law enforcement center did not, they strongly advised him to get it.

In other matters involving the sheriff's department, Jones requested ap-County on his way to the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Academy. The vehicle slid sideways and rolled. That vehicle, a 1994 Ford Crown Victoria, had been used primarily for prisoner

The commissioners approved the ourchase of a 1998 Crown Victoria with police package from the Kansas Highway Patrol for \$13,175. It has 70,000 miles on it, and has a kennel for

Jones proposed to use the new vehicle for the canine officer, and use an older car for prisoner transport.

Undersheriff Mike Baughn requested approval for a small building, about 12 by 12 feet, to be built by the radio tower for the radios.

Presently the radios are housed in a small room with the generator, but the building is in need of repair. The city has proposed to provide the labor if the county buys the material. Bids for the building were \$3,128.43 from C&K Lumber, and \$2,056.72 from Colby

The county approved buying materials for the building, and told Baughn to get bids on repairing the building housing the generator.

Baughn also requested approval to purchase two digital cameras for \$1,130.95 each to be used to record crime scenes, and such. The cameras have the capacity for video and sound. The commissioners approved the purchase of one camera.

The officers asked how they were doing on budget, and learned they were doing well. Baughn said the jail is looking at some major plumbing repairs, as the original pipes are leaking beside the

Other items of business included:

· Larry Jumper, landfill director, introduced Travis Williby, who will start Jan. 2 as the new employee at the landfill. Jumper said winter hours at the landfill are: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday,

The landfill will return to summer hour on ice" to get to an accident, and hours when Daylight Savings Time

> He said the Department of Health and Environment has renewed the Thomas County Landfill permit from Jan. 12, 2001, to Jan. 12, 2002. The group briefly discussed money, and the budget is ready for landfill operations to begin Jan. 1.

> A city employee had taken the tires for the landfill loader to Denver to be filled with foam. He was housed by his brother, thus saving the county money, and the commissioners said they appreciate his keeping the cost down for

• Marian K. Lindberg, Thomas County EMS director, brought her letter of resignation, effective Jan. 24. She will be attending Fort Hays State University to obtain a bachelor of nursing degree, but will be available by phone for consultation, and will be conducting monthly training for Thomas County EMS, and help out on call when back in Colby. Josh Buffington will be the new EMS director, and Martin Rinehart will be his assistant. The commissioners wished Lindberg the best. Lindberg said Thomas County EMS had 603 ambulance calls/incidents in 2000, a 10 percent increase in proval to purchase a vehicle to replace calls. Insurance collections were one that was totaled when Officer \$123,790.15 which included private Allen Marcum hit slick roads in Reno pay, Medicare, Medicaid and Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

> Chris Bieker, road and bridge director, brought several end of the year budget transfers.

They transferred \$8,987.13 from the East Hale Township Special Equipment Fund to the Thomas County Special Equipment Fund. The money is used to reimburse the county for money spent maintaining the township roads; transferred \$13,518.55 from the East Hale Township General fund to the Thomas County Special Equipment Fund; transferred \$5,462.95 from the North Randall township Special Equipment Fund to the Thomas County Special Equipment Fund; transferred \$30,127 from the North Randall township General fund to the Thomas County Special Equipment Fund – this money was used for repairs on a grader, mower and loader; transferred \$25,000 from the County Road and Bridge Fund to the county Special Highway Improvement Fund.

• Economic Development Director Gerry Fulwider asked how the county wanted to handle collateral on micro loans. The loans are available for up to \$15,000 for people wishing to start new businesses or expand existing businesses.

The commissioners told him to put the liens in the name of Thomas County Economic Development Alliance. The county also has revolving loans available for up to \$100,000, and anyone interested should contact Fulwider.



Firefighters work to overhaul a blaze at the Northwest Furniture warehouse, Second and Cornell in Oakley. The origin of the fire is still un-

Warehouse destroyed in Oakley fire

By JAY KELLEY Colby Free Press

fire destroyed the Northwest Furnia Morton-type building on the south,

ture warehouse in Oakley this morn-connected by a hallway. warehouse at Cornell and Second streets at 1:30 a.m.

Firefighters were confronted by flames and smoke blowing out of windows and a partial collapse of the roof in the north building when they arrived. "There was fire through the

OAKLEY — An early morning buildings, a Quonset on the north and north.'

south building was already heavily in-

Heavy fire and a partial collapse forced firefighters to take a defensive

stance early. "We were trying to protect expo-

roof when we got there" Martin said. enough wind out of the south to blow about 5 a.m. The warehouse consisted of two some brands into the houses to the

north into three houses also occupying operations, making it difficult and ing. Fire chief Tim Martin said the Martin said the morth building was the block. The houses were also evacudangerous to get to the remaining fire department was called to the completely involved in fire and the ated because of the smoke and heat. fire. Although there was minor damage to one of the houses, the fire department to have started in the hall between was able to prevent the fire from

> Martin said both city pumpers and one rural truck were committed to the sures," said Martin, "we had just fire, which was declared under control new year," he said.

Firefighters continue to look for hot spots and overhaul the embers. Burning brands were sent flying Martin said a subfloor was hindering

> Martin also said the fire appeared buildings, but no determination as to cause and damage estimates had been made.

"It wasn't the best way to start the

Governor's race open; speculation begins

By CARL MANNING Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA (AP) — It seems a trifle early to talk about who wants to be governor in 2002, but not for anybody who's considering it — or even thinking about considering it.

None of the aspirants are quite ready to bang the drum and announce their candidacies. Those considering — or said to be considering — all have variations of the same response: It's too early to say for sure.

"Whether it's too early or not isn't the question. Folks already are talking about it," said GOP State Chairman Mark Parkinson.

Parkinson said potential candidates simply aren't being coy or playing hard to get when they waffle.

"Many of the prominent potential candidates have taken the position of waiting until April or May and then making a decision," he said. "I don't

think anyone wants to actively run for other whose name has been mentioned governor for two years, so the preference is to delay until spring.'

In November 2002, Kansans will elect somebody to replace Republican Bill Graves, serving his second and final four-year term. The list of potential candidates is growing like mushrooms after a spring shower.

One of the first names to pop up is Lt. Gov. Gary Sherrer, who says he hasn't decided but admits he's given it some thought. He was appointed by Graves to the No. 2 spot in 1996 and was elected in 1998 on the ticket with Graves.

"Early next summer will be a good time to decide," Sherrer said. "When I decide, I will let you know. I believe if you are running, you tell people."

With an open governor's seat, others may be coming out of the political

Congressman Jerry Moran is an-

in GOP circles. Moran has been in Washington since 1996 and served eight years before that in the state Senate. "He's one of the most astute people I've seen involved in Kansas politics. In the ability to appeal to the electorate, he has no equal," said Senate President-elect Dave Kerr, R-Hutchinson.

Moran said he's focused on the congressional session that begins Wednes-

"It seems awfully early to make a decision about future political office,"

Another possible candidate is Speaker-elect Kent Glasscock, R-Manhattan, who says, "All I am thinking about is how I can be a successful speaker. My focus is on the Kansas

How well Glasscock does as speaker will be a factor in any gubernatorial bid. If he's perceived as a weak speaker said.

who can't hold Republicans together, then his political stock will tumble.

Parkinson said he hasn't discounted the idea of running, but wants to see how the field shapes up before making a decision. Like the other potential candidates, he's a moderate.

Moderates control the state GOP machinery but there remain many conservatives within the party.

One conservative who has been mentioned is State Treasurer Tim Shallenburger, who could benefit from a crowded field of moderates.

Shallenburger said he hasn't decided but has been wooed by some of his fellow conservative Republicans.

Another conservative mentioned is Congressman Todd Tiahrt of Wichita but he hasn't expressed any public interest in moving from Washington to Topeka. The odds favor a Republican being the next governor, Parkinson

Briefly

Weather: Warming trend

A rapid warm-up is forecast for the Colby area for the reminder of the week, according to the National Weather Service. Tonight, expect partly cloudy skies, lows around 25 and west winds 10 mph. Wednesday, partly sunny, highs in the lower 50s and northwest winds 15-25 mph and gusty. Wednesday night and Thursday, clear, lows in the 20s and highs 55-65. Thursday night and Friday, lows in the 20s and highs 45-50. Colby's weekend temperatures: highs, 33 on Friday, 27 on Saturday and 22 on Sunday; lows, 15 on Saturday, 4 on Sunday and 10 this morning. The soil temperatures at the four-inch depth is averaging 29 degrees. There was a trace of snow over the weekend, with the moisture content only 0.2 of an inch. The records for Jan. 2: 69 in 1922 and -17 in 1942. (The daily temperatures and precipi-

tation are provided by the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Holiday weekend quiet

With the exception of a few minor incidents, local law enforcement officials said today that the New Year holiday

weekend was quiet. "We had a couple of domestic dispute calls and a couple of loud party complaints on New Year's Eve, but other than that, it was uneventful," said Colby Police Chief Randall Jones. The report was much the same in the county. "It was really quiet," said Thomas County Sheriff Tom Jones. "We stopped one vehicle and made several minor in possession arrests, but that was it.'

The Kansas Highway Patrol reported no vehicle acci-

unconfirmed vehicle fatality in the entire state.

Council meeting canceled

The Colby City Council meeting scheduled for today has been canceled, according to city officials. The next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 16, at 7:30 p.m. in council chambers at City Hall. For questions, call 462-4410.

Midwest Energy accepting trees

Used Christmas trees may be left at the Midwest Energy, 1125 S. Range, after Christmas for recycling. All decorations and plastic tree removal bags must be removed from the trees before they are deposited. The collection points

dents in the area during the three-day period with only one will remain open through the first week of January.

Grade school site council to meet

The Colby Grade School Site Council will meet Monday at 6:30 p.m., Jan. 8, in the grade school cafeteria. The public is invited. For information, call 465-5100.

Concert set at high school

Dan and Wendy Smith of Kansas City will perform at 7 p.m. Sunday Jan. 7, at Colby High School. The event is sponsored by Mingo Bible Church. The couple, according to officials, will perform praise songs with songs of quiet worship and challenge for the whole family. The public is invited and a free-will offering will be taken. For information, call Pastor Jon Hansen at 785-462-2992.

Colby Free Press ????day, date, 1998 **Page 3**