



COLBY  
FREE PRESS

# First baby arrives 31 minutes into the new year

By **PATTY DECKER**  
*Free Press Editor*

Thirty-one minutes into the new year, Thomas County welcomed its first baby of 2002 born at Citizens Medical Center in Colby.

Bryce Adlor Fortin, the son of Randy and Melanie Fortin of Colby, born at 12:31 a.m., Tuesday, Jan. 1, weighed in at 9 lbs., 14 oz., and was 20 1/2" long, hospital officials said today.

For more than a decade, the Colby Free Press, along with other businesses and organizations, have celebrated this special event by showering the newborn with money, merchandise and handmade items.

This year being no exception, Citizens Medical Center will be presenting Bryce with a \$50 U.S. savings bond; Colby Photo has a \$15 gift certificate for film developing; Omicron Upsilon will be placing its stork, Sammy, in the Fortin's front yard to let everyone know the good news; Gambino's Pizza has a large pizza and drinks waiting for the parents; and Thomas County Health Department wants to ensure Bryce's safety by offering free infant car seat rental or breast pump.

Other merchants include Wark's Embroidery and Gifts with a lace picture frame; Farmers and Merchants Bank with a \$25 gift certificate; Gold Bank with a coin; BankWest with a \$50 U.S. savings bond; Colby Bowl with a \$25 gift certificate; Pizza Hut with a large pizza; Dillons with a \$25 gift certificate; Village Inn with \$20 gift certificate; First National Bank with a \$50 U.S. savings bond; first immunizations free at the Family Center for Health Care and a one year subscription for the parents to the Colby Free Press.

Last year's first baby of the year was Chandler Wayne Welker, the son of Jason and Jennifer Welker.

Chandler arrived Friday, Jan. 5, weighing 6 lbs., 6 oz. and was the Welker's second child.

The first baby born in the 21st Century was Brooke Dorenkamp, the daughter of Tony and Michelle Dorenkamp of Hoxie. Brooke was born at 12:10 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 1 and weighed 7lbs., 6 oz. The newest member of the Thomas County community was unavailable for pictures earlier today, but will be featured in Thursday's edition of the Free Press, along with more details from his parents.

# Liquor store shooting reported at Goodland

By **DOUG STEPHENS**  
*The Goodland Daily News*

**GOODLAND** — Jack Kamper of Kamper Retail Liquor allegedly shot a 20-year-old Sharon Springs man who authorities said was trying to rob the Goodland store on New Year's Eve.

Sharon Springs people have identified the man as Del Ray Dreiling.

Goodland Police Chief Ray Smee said about 9:45 p.m. the robbery suspect entered the liquor store with a loaded .22 caliber handgun and attempted to rob an unidentified clerk at gunpoint.

When the suspect went around a corner of the store counter, the owner of the store came out of his office with a handgun and shot him once on the right side of his chest. Smee did not know if the robber knew anyone was in the store besides the clerk.

Smee said that Dreiling was taken to Goodland Regional Medical Center by ambulance, and was flown from there

to St. Anthony Central Hospital in Denver, where he underwent surgery Tuesday morning.

Sharon Springs residents said the bullet lodged in Dreiling's spine and passed through several vital organs and that the bullet was removed during the surgery. The hospital neither confirmed nor denied this information.

As of 9 a.m. today, he is still listed as being in critical condition. A hospital spokesperson said she was not free to release any more information.

Smee said authorities are reviewing a videotape of security cameras which were working in the store at the time of the attack.

He said that the Goodland Police Department is handing the continuing investigation, with the assistance from the Sherman County Sheriff's Office, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, and the Kansas Highway Patrol.

Kamper said he had been advised not to comment on the situation.

# County commissioners transfer numerous funds

By **MAXINE NELSON**  
*Colby Free Press*

The Thomas County Commissioners spent most of their Monday meeting transferring funds, as they dealt with year-end financial matters.

They transferred money from townships, which had voted to have the county maintain their roads, to the Thomas County road department, which has been working on the roads all during the year.

Transfers included: \$26,459 from the North Randall Township general fund to the Thomas County special equipment fund; \$1,459 from the East Hale Township special equipment fund to the Thomas County special equipment fund; \$22,207 from the East Hale Township general fund to the Thomas County special equipment

fund. No one appeared to protest the hearing on the East Hale Township budget amendment. Dale Deaver, township trustee, brought a check for \$895 from Barrett Township to East Hale to cover its half of the cost of utilities and upkeep of the building and park in Levant. Chris Bieker, roads department, said the East Hale Township was still short \$2,679 for road work done in 2001, but he will make it up next year.

The commissioners transferred \$30,000 from the Thomas County road and bridge fund to the Thomas County special highway improvement fund, and resolved that the remaining county road and bridge funds on Dec. 31, 2001, be transferred to the county special equipment fund. They resolved to transfer any noxious weed department

# They're back!



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

School is back in session and the weather has turned a bit more seasonal for January, but that didn't seem to bother Colby Elementary

School students at recess today. Maura Hansen enjoyed her turn down the slide as her friend, Victoria Rall, ran to take another turn.

## Year in review

# Community Service Award won by Black

By **PATTY DECKER**  
*Free Press Editor*

Thomas County and Colby had its share of people in the news during 2001 and much of it was for community service.

During the early part of May, the Thomas County/Colby Chamber of Commerce honored Cindy Black as the Community Service recipient; Kevin and Cindi Kriss as business persons of the year and Andrew Strange was the first-time award winner in the

Schools-to-Careers Business Partners Program.

A juvenile justice mini-grant also hit the news early in May offering law enforcement officials and students the opportunity to talk with one another on a variety of topics with the goal of better understanding the pressures and/or problems each face on a daily basis.

Colby Public Schools' annual awards ceremony saw hundreds of thousands of dollars awarded to high school students given in the form of

grants and scholarships.

The Thomas County Red Cross continued to inform residents of the need to be ready in the event of disaster, which was partially prompted by the tornado in Hoisington that ripped through five miles of that area damaging buildings, homes and downing power lines.

By mid-May, the Thomas County Community Foundation had put up its signage on the Thomas County Office Complex promising to live up to its

motto: "Forever Betterment."

While county schools and Colby Community College were celebrating graduations also in mid-May, committee members on the college's endowment board raised a record breaking \$44,000 in scholarships at its annual auction.

During the month of June, controversy erupted as to whether or not Citizens Medical Center would continue

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# Balloon released at boy's funeral makes long journey

**HUTCHINSON (AP)** — At first, Gene and Sue Yoder ignored the answering machine message left by a man whose booming voice said he was D.K., calling from Georgia. After all, they didn't know anyone in Georgia. Then D.K. called again, and said he'd found one of their balloons. This time, the Yoders listened. Gage Switzer, the Yoders' 8-year-old grandson, was killed Dec. 15 when a tractor rolled over a tarp under which he was playing.

At his Dec. 20 funeral, the Hesston second-grader's schoolmates and young church friends released more than 100 balloons — mostly primary

colors, Gage's favorite — over Pleasantview Cemetery in Darlow.

Sue Yoder watched as the bright, helium-filled pack drifted out of sight. Attached to each balloon was a laminated card with Gage's name, birth and death dates, and the Yoders' address. Two days later, D.K. Freeman's son found a blue balloon and card in the smallest of clearings on the family's five acres of heavily wooded property in Greenville, Ga. — 800 miles away.

"My boy brought it out of the woods," said D.K. Freeman, a 71-year-old retired railroad worker. "I just thought, 'Well, golly.'"

# Briefly

## Weather: A little warmer

The Colby region's temperature Thursday could climb into the mid-50s, the National Weather Service said this morning. Tonight, clear, lows around 10 and south winds around 10 mph. Thursday, sunny, highs 49-54 and southwest winds 5-15 mph. Thursday night, clear early, then becoming mostly cloudy, lows around 20. Friday, cloudy, a 30 percent chance for rain or snow showers, highs around 40. Saturday, partly cloudy, lows 15-20 and highs in the upper 30s. Colby's high Tuesday was 27 and the overnight low this morning was +1. The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is averaging 27 degrees. The records for Jan. 2: 69 in 1922 and -17 in 1942. *(The daily temperatures, precipita-*

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

## Recycling center takes phone books

The Thomas County Recycling Center is taking old telephone books at its collection site, 720 E. College Dr. in Colby. Those wanting to drop off the books should use the magazine bins, coordinators said.

## Chamber luncheon next Friday

The Thomas County/Colby Chamber of Commerce luncheon will be held at noon on Friday, Jan. 11, at the Ramada Inn. Highlighting the meeting will be Melly Schmidt, di-

rector of Kansas 4-kids. "Melly has a long and distinguished career both in politics and public education. The luncheon is open to all chamber members and guests. For information, call 462-3401.

## Church Women hold supper

The Ascension-on-the-Prairie Episcopal Church Women is sponsoring a soup supper and bake sale on Wednesday, Jan. 9 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the Colby Community Building. Soups include homemade chili and vegetable soup and tickets are \$3 for the first bowl with refills, \$1. Children under 5 eat free. The event is also in conjunction with the Colby/McCook college basketball game.

## Youth rally set in January

Colby Public Schools is hosting a youth rally with the theme, "Directions for the Future," on Thursday. More than 600 students will be attending the event from Oakley, Goodland, Tri-Plains, Atwood, Grinnell and Colby, said Joni-Clark Leiker, Colby High School counselor. Seating for some of the sessions will be available to the public at 10:35 a.m. to hear Jason Dorsey, an author and speaker who has appeared on NBC's Today Show and ABC's "The View." In addition, there will be limited seating for Bill Cordes' presentation at 12:30 p.m. Cordes is known for his speaking and as a consultant and author of many books involving teenagers. For information, call 465-5300.

