



COLBY FREE PRESS

According to fire chief . . .

Controlled fire a rare learning opportunity

By JAY KELLEY
Colby Free Press

Colby firefighters spent their Tuesday night training session reviewing lessons from the controlled live fire on Saturday when the old Rainbow Drive-in and the adjoining house were demolished.

The buildings, on the corner of Fourth and Sterling, were scheduled for demolition by the Knights of Columbus, who eventually want to put an activity building on the property.

Colby Fire Chief Bob McLemore thought the chance for some realistic training would be good, so he agreed to burn the house. The fire department did the same thing with the house at Fourth and French almost five years ago, again for the Knights of Columbus.

which is burned to create realistic smoke conditions. Actual fire conditions, with parts of the structure burning, are too unpredictable for safe training.

"We were able to repeat the training evolution many times safely," he said. Fire crews practiced searching for a dummy victim, nicknamed Ivan, hidden in the house. Crews also practiced with a thermal imaging camera, provided by Danko Fire Equipment of Salina. The camera can "see" heat from a fire victim's body or from a fire hidden inside a wall.

The unit also has the ability to send images back to a remote television, allowing command officers to see what the inside crews are seeing.

Firefighters reviewed a recording made from the video feed that showed the dummy only a few feet from firefighters, who still could not see it. Service Officer J.L. Ellis said, "You can take your most experienced crew without the camera, and they will get beat by the most inexperienced crew with it."

Cost of the cameras range from

\$18,000-\$25,000 depending on specifications, but firefighters were impressed by the capabilities.

The camera was also used to check the heat conditions in the "burn room," where the barrels were kept, to make sure fire didn't extend to the structure.

Once all the crews were finished, a hole was cut in the roof and in the first floor to allow air to move through the building and a pile of flammable materials were set on fire in the basement.

A water curtain was set up for a short time to protect the old drive-in, giving fire crews practice in protecting exposures. The curtain was also invaluable practice for protecting exposed structures. The drive-in building, only a few feet from the house, was not harmed by flames at all until the curtain was removed. Two water cannons and a nozzle on the end of the ladder of Engine 2 were used to cool embers carried by the winds.

"We really appreciate the people who put up with the smoke and inconvenience," said McLemore. "This was a rare opportunity for live training and it was a great asset for us."



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

Colby firefighters Sean Hankin and Doug Lewis waited their turn to enter a smoke-filled house during a training exercise Saturday. Firefighters from Winona, Oakley and Sheridan County also took part in the exercise.



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

Dan Baalman and Skyler Rosenberg, along with Skyler's mother, Jennifer, got acquainted at the Colby airport before a trip to Kansas City on Tuesday.

Colby 'angel' answers the call

By PATTY DECKER
Free Press Editor

A 21-month-old Colby boy was flown to Kansas City on Tuesday with the help of an angel.

Skyler Rosenberg, the son of Jennifer Rosenberg and Seth Warren, has multiple birth defects and needs surgery, followed up by seven months of treatments, his mother said.

In order to accomplish these things, Jennifer enlisted the help of AngelFlight Central, and Mark Ostmeier, a pilot and manager of the Colby Municipal Airport, answered the call. Along with Jennifer and son, Skyler, Ostmeier also recruited Dan Baalman of Colby to accompany them on the flight while waiting in

Kansas City on Tuesday.

"This was the first time we have used AngelFlight," Jennifer said, "and we are so grateful for this service."

On this trip, Skyler was getting x-rays in Kansas City and other tests to determine the next step in correcting a club foot.

It is expected that a cast on his left foot will also be required in the future.

Jennifer, who only recently moved to Colby from Goodland said she has two other children, Serena, 5, and Seth, 1, and without this service she said these trips would be difficult and a hardship.

AngelFlight is a volunteer group dedicated to helping people who need transportation to medical care, Ostmeier said, and has been in operation

for 18 years.

When Ostmeier first heard about the organization, which serves people in 11 western states and has flown more than 10,000 missions, he said he wanted to be included.

There are two people involved in this group from Colby, he said.

"I fly and Ken Bixenman provides the plane," Ostmeier said.

In recent months, he has flown an infant from St. Francis to Colorado to see a specialist there and another Colby child was taken to the Shrine Crippled Children's Hospital in St. Louis for medical care.

For questions or information about the service, call 1-800-474-9464 or look on their website at: www.angelflightcentral.org.

Thompson trial set for April 1

By PATTY DECKER
Free Press Editor

The trial date has been set for a Colby teenager, who pled not guilty late last year, on multiple charges to include second degree murder stemming from a fatal accident two years ago.

Thomas County District Court Judge Glenn D. Schiffrer set the trial for Michael A. Thompson, 18, of Colby, to begin on Monday, April 1, at 1:30 p.m.

A pre-trial date was scheduled for Wednesday, March 20 at 1:30 p.m. with orders and any other motions due

on or before March 6.

As the trial date nears, Thomas County Attorney Allan Taylor was granted approval to admit a Kansas Bureau of Investigation lab report regarding Thompson's blood alcohol examination following the accident on Jan. 29, 2000.

In addition to the second degree murder charge alleging that Angela Duden and Justin Shaw, 17, and both of Colby, died as a result of the accident, Thompson is being charged with two counts of aggravated battery, driving under the influence and reckless

driving. All charges resulted from the two-vehicle collision that occurred about eight miles east of Colby on U.S. Highway 24. Taylor said on Tuesday that paperwork for the trial took nearly one year to file since the defendant himself was hospitalized for injuries he had as a result of the accident.

Further, in November, the court ruled that Thompson would be tried as an adult rather than a juvenile, which again required new filings of the charges.

Cal Williams of Colby is Thompson's court-appointed attorney.

No tax increase in budget plan

TOPEKA (AP)—What one official called an "ugly pig contest" is underway after two Senate Republican leaders outlined a proposal for solving the state's budget problems without a tax increase. The new plan, outlined Tuesday by Senate President Dave Kerr, of Hutchinson, and Ways and Means Chairman Steve Morris, of Hugoton, relies instead on cutting spending and tapping rainy-day funds. It is an alternative to the budget Gov. Bill Graves

plans to submit to legislators, who convene their 2002 session Monday.

Graves has promised to propose tax increases to avoid some cuts in government programs, but Kerr and Morris said the state shouldn't take more money from its residents when the economy is slumping.

"We think we need to provide the best budget we can craft within existing resources," Kerr said during a news conference. "The budget picture is bad,

but we don't believe it is dire."

Even the governor and his staff haven't expressed much enthusiasm for the budget Graves plans to submit. They have emphasized that Kansas law requires Graves to submit a budget that relies only on existing revenue sources — not the tax increases he'll propose.

Budget Director Duane Goossen said the Kerr-Morris plan also is unattractive because it would cut spending by many state agencies.

Aerospace plant to lay off 250 in state

WICHITA (AP) — Bombardier Aerospace plans to lay off 800 additional workers due to the continuing downturn in the business aircraft market.

The latest cuts announced Tuesday will be at Bombardier's manufacturing plants in Wichita and Arizona, and come about three months after Canadian-based Bombardier said it would slash 3,800 jobs worldwide.

The company said at the time that further layoffs were predicted if significant improvements in the business

aircraft market did not occur.

"Unfortunately, the business aircraft market has been slow to recover," Jim Ziegler, vice president and general manager of Learjet Operations and Aircraft Completion Centers, said in a prepared statement.

Bombardier bought Learjet in 1990.

Most of the additional reductions will occur at Bombardier's Tucson Completion Center, where 550 people will lose their jobs during the next 12 months.

Another 250 people will be laid off

in Wichita over the next 90 days.

About 350 Bombardier workers in Wichita lost their jobs in that initial cutback. The Tucson facility had not been affected by the prior layoffs.

"We have been monitoring the marketplace and especially corporate profits because corporate profits tend to be a pretty good indicator of what we see" in orders for corporate jets, Bombardier spokesman David Franson said Tuesday.

The latest job cuts will bring the workforce in Wichita down to 3,200.

State's flight schools tighten security procedures in wake of Florida crash

WICHITA (AP) — Some Kansas flight schools have tightened security procedures after a 15-year-old flight student flew his plane into a Florida bank building during the weekend.

Some have stopped giving plane keys to students for preflight checks, and others are doing more background

checks. David Dewhirst, owner of the Sabris Corp. flight school at Jabara Field, said every flight school in the country uses the same procedures as the Florida flight school. "That is the way it has been done since the Wright brothers," he said.

But Dewhirst said Sabris is consid-

ering doing the same background checks on its students as those used for people who buy hand guns. The school has also begun having instructors keep the keys until they get out to the field for flight training.

"That is our token contribution to reacting to people who don't know

very much about the task, but feel the necessity to criticize it," he said.

At Mid-Continent Airport, Yingling Aviation has also stopped giving the keys to its new students to do preflight checks on airplanes until an instructor is present, said Terry Cox, director of flight training. Yingling has been do-

ing more lengthy entrance interviews since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. More than 90 percent of the students who learn to fly at Yingling are local residents.

At Sabris, where 20 percent are foreign, the school had its own unique procedures in place long before the

terrorist attacks.

"A couple of years ago, we had our own lack of comfort with people from the Middle East, particularly Iraq, Iran and Kuwait . . . Our instructors did not appreciate flying with them, and it became an arduous task to find an instructor to fly with them," Dewhirst said.

Briefly

Weather: Light snow expected

The Colby area could receive up to an inch of snow late tonight, according to the National Weather Service forecast. The chances for precipitation are rated at 60 percent. The lows will be in the upper 20s with north winds up to 10 mph. Thursday, cloudy, a 30 percent chance for light snow in the morning, with highs in the lower 40s and north winds 15-25 mph. Thursday night, partly cloudy, lows in the upper teens. Friday and Saturday, cloudy to partly cloudy conditions, lows in the lower 20s and highs in the upper 40s on Friday and upper 30s on Saturday. Colby's high Tuesday

was a record-setting 72 degrees (the old record was 71 set in 1965), and the overnight low this morning was 33, climbing to 45 by 8 a.m. Still no precipitation for the month. The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is averaging 32 degrees. The records for Jan. 9: 70 in 1916 and -13 in 1973. (*The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.*)

Genesis annual meeting scheduled

The annual meeting of Genesis-Thomas County, Inc. will be held Thursday, Jan. 17 at 6 p.m. in the Thomas County

Office Complex. The regular meeting will be held immediately following, said Rosalie Seemann, board member.

Deadline Saturday for blood tests

Time is running out for those wanting blood tests for the Jan. 26 Wellness Fair. According to the Colby Wellness Committee, blood will be drawn for the last time at the Citizens Medical Center laboratory from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Saturday. Those participating are required to fast for 10-12 hours prior to the test. Results will be available at the

fair from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The fair will again be held at the Colby Community College Student Union.

'Meals on Wheels' needs volunteers

The Meals on Wheels program is in need of volunteers to deliver on Saturdays or Sundays during the odd months of 2002. Meals on Wheels delivers an average of 23 meals per day, said Jeanene Brown, one of the coordinators. Anyone who might be able to help in delivery is asked to call Brown at 462-4850.

