



# COLBY FREE PRESS

## Push is made for new jail

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

There's a new jail in the offing for Thomas County if law enforcement officers have their way. Sheriff Tom Jones and Undersheriff Mike Baughn brought the 2001 jail report to the county commissioners at their Monday meeting.

Baughn said the total inmate days for the year 2000 was 4,196 with the lowest inmate count 4, the highest inmate count 29, and the average inmate count 11.4. Total inmate days for 2001 was 4,266, with the lowest inmate count 3, highest inmate count 30, and average inmate count 11.6.

Several of the inmates were apprehended on I-70, and some are local citizens. So far this year, as of Jan. 11, the total inmate days was 17, lowest inmate count 17, highest inmate count 17, and average inmate count, 17. The jail has nine beds.

Total cases in the year 2000 were 731 and total for 2001 was 826. So far in 2002, there have been 21 cases.

The department served 2,011 civil process warrants in 2000, and 2,404 in 2001. Each service may take several attempts.

Baughn said the National Institute of Corrections Jail Center prepared a local systems assessment of the Thomas County Jail during May 1993, and the findings of the consultants regarding our jail facilities and operations have not substantially changed and recommended changes have not been made.

The following deficiencies were noted: The booking area, approximately 144 square feet, is inadequate and since then more items necessary to the booking of inmates have been added, making it even more crowded, said Baughn.

The jail does not have a definable intake area. Space is not provided for a vehicle sally port, holding cells, shower/search/dress out area or property/clothing exchange.

Natural light is not available and ventilation is poor. Inadequate regulation of room temperature has always been a problem.

The jail facilities would have difficulty meeting staff and inmate requirements of the ADA.

The jail does not provide functional utility. The building does not accommodate the functions and activities or provide the level of conditions demanded by contemporary legal requirements. The report summarized the jail as having: inadequate living space; inadequate intake area; inadequate emergency release capacity; inadequate program space; and inadequate space for medical exam/treatment. Baughn said the jail had been built in 1976 to 1976 technology, and since the 1993 report, the only real enhancements have been the addition of security cameras, a north emergency exit, and sufficient staff for 24-hour coverage. He is especially concerned with the booking area being so small, because an inmate might become violent and harm himself or others.

The former padded cell has been converted into an all-purpose inmate service area, containing food preparation, food storage, and inmate laundry. The room is too small, he said.

There are only nine beds in the jail, with two concrete ledges in the detoxification cell can be used, if necessary, although there are no shower facilities in that cell. Portable "boats" are also utilized to bed inmates on the floor when the bunk space is filled.

He said in 2001 they had to transport inmates to the Sherman County Jail for housing because there was no more room in the Thomas County Jail.

Baughn said the report ends with a recommendation that Thomas County and the City of Colby adopt a systematic process for improving the jail, and that the county commissioners appoint a criminal justice strategic planning committee by September, 1993.

That recommendation was never acted upon, and Baughn repeated it.

The sheriff said he would look into the possibility of using some drug seizure money to enlarge and improve the jail, and would also check into the possibility of applying for some grant money.

## Going . . . going . . .



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Workers began the demolition of the former P&D Automotive building at 335 E. Fourth which was badly damaged by a fire in October. Bill Miller, who bought the lots, said he had some plans for the property, but nothing was final.

## Graves eyes taxes on tobacco, gas and groceries

By JOHN HANNA

Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Gov. Bill Graves wants to increase taxes on cigarettes, gasoline and groceries to help prevent cuts in social services and to raise a little extra money for public schools. In his State of the State address Monday night, Graves outlined a plan to raise \$228 million in fiscal 2003, which begins July 1. The tax package is his attempt to help close a \$426 million hole between expected revenue and spending commitments.

"We're either going to invest in the future, or we're going to deny vital

services, critical programs and economic opportunity to Kansans," Graves told legislators in his eighth and final State of the State. "It's that simple."

Smokers would pay an extra 65 cents for each package of cigarettes. Motorists would pay a penny a gallon more for gasoline or diesel fuel and 75 cents more a year to register a car. The proposed 0.25 percent sales tax increase would cost Kansans 25 cents on every \$100 cart of groceries.

Graves already has submitted a proposed budget to the Legislature that would cut education and social ser-

vices spending, close the minimum-security prisons and cancel the highway projects. State law required him to submit a balanced budget that assumes no new sources of revenue, and his package of tax increases is designed to offset the austerity of that document.

Initial reaction from Republican and Democratic legislators was cool.

Sen. Tim Huelskamp, R-Fowler, said his constituents oppose tax increases because they represent "big bucks they can't afford right now."

Senate President Dave Kerr, R-Hutchinson, has helped draft an alternative that relies on spending cuts and

dipping into rainy day funds to avoid a tax increase. He said Graves presented a worst-case scenario in the budget he submitted last week.

"What took up a major part of the speech was restoration of cuts the Legislature wasn't going to make anyway," Kerr said.

Rep. Doug Mays of Topeka said: "We're not in the mood to raise taxes. The people of this state are not in the mood to raise taxes."

Democratic leaders said Graves and the GOP for what they said was its mismanagement of the state's finances during Graves' seven years in office.

## Check and mate



JAY KELLEY/Colby Free Press

Spencer Tubbs rooted for Amy Schroeder against Tyson Miller at the Sacred Heart Chess Club meeting recently. The club, sponsored by Laura Tubbs, meets every week and is open to all Sacred Heart students. Club members are Jackie Webb, Abby Miller, Megan Dougherty, Jaydon Bixenman, Tyson Miller, Amy Schroeder, Adam Schroeder, Zach Webb, Bob Schroeder, Spencer Tubbs and Sean Skiles.

## At Chamber luncheon

### 'Children first' is speaker's theme

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

Melly Karst Schmidt, director of Kansas Children's Campaign, spoke at the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce luncheon Friday at the Ramada Inn and called for more involvement by the public at large to put kids first.

Her presentation followed a round table discussion with SmartStart of Northwest Kansas and other child caretakers at which Schmidt was also a speaker.

Schmidt said she has three children who have now completed college, but is concerned about the lack of opportunity in northwest Kansas for young people.

"How do you get kids to come back?" she asked.

She was traveling throughout the state to find out what issues are important to the citizens of the state.

She said the Kansas Children's Campaign will improve the lives of children and families in Kansas by educating and inspiring voters to elect public officials of any party who will

make children a priority.

She said the Children's Campaign is about developing citizen advocates composed of a statewide network of community leaders and grassroots volunteers working to unite Kansans around ways to help children, and urged citizens to become advocates. "Calls from home are more influential than lobbyists," she said.

She said the Children's Campaign intends to create a political environment throughout Kansas where children's needs come first. The Campaign will be asking candidates where they stand on issues regarding children's needs.

The Children's Campaign wants to empower communities to form a consensus vision on improving the quality of life for its children and families. It is a nonpartisan statewide community empowerment and education project to ensure voter and candidate attention to Kansas' 700,000 children who have no political voice of their own.

She said programs are in place, "and we pay taxes for programs to provide

services to children.

People need to be educated to take advantage of the services available."

Schmidt cited a telephone survey of frequent voters, showed that 67 percent of those polled wanted more help for kids, instead of lower taxes.

About 45 people attended the luncheon which was chaired by Jon Eicher.

Matt Hamill gave the invocation, and Leilani Thomas, Tourism and Travel director, introduced the members of Leadership Thomas County who were present.

Eicher said the chamber is alternating Business After 5, and the noon luncheons.

The February meeting will be After 5, the place to be announced, and the next luncheon will be in March.

Economic Development Director Jerry Fulwider reported on the Chamber Christmas tree sales.

Thomas said there were 1,200 visitors to Santa City this year. She said Colby will have a new promotional brochure, and work has begun on the new visitors center near I-70.

Dinner tickets are \$15 each. Return to Kansas Pioneer Chapter Pheasants Forever, PO Box 205, Colby. For more information call Mike at 462-3391, days, or 462-8806, evenings; or Daryl, 462-3704, evenings.

## Wellness Fair set for Jan. 26

Those who had blood work done for this year's Wellness Fair will receive an explanation of the findings at the event on Saturday, Jan. 26, during presentations scheduled for 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., and 12:30 p.m. The Wellness Fair is open to everyone with many activities and information available from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and is being held in the student union at Colby Community College.

## Briefly

### Weather: Cold and dry

The balance of the week is going to be pretty cold and dry in the Colby area, according to the forecast from the National Weather Service. Tonight, cloudy, lows in the teens and northeast winds up to 10 mph. Wednesday, cloudy, again cold with highs only in the lower 30s and north winds 5-15 mph. Wednesday night, partly cloudy, lows in the mid-teens. Thursday, mostly sunny but cold with highs in the upper 20s. Friday, partly cloudy, lows in the teens and highs in the lower 30s. Monday's high in Colby was 44 and the overnight low this morning was 14. The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is averaging 34 degrees. Precipitation for the month remains at 0.10 inches. The records for Jan.

15: 70 in 1943 and -15 in 1979. (The daily temperatures, precipitation and records are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

### City Council meets tonight

The Colby City Council will meet at 7:30 p.m. tonight in the council chambers. They are expected to approve a quit claim deed to Sunflower partners on a tract of land in SE1/4-12-8-34; approve an agreement with Cahoj Earthmoving for subgrade modification for Horton Avenue; approve a health insurance plan effective Feb. 1; and consider a recommendation of the planning commission on the request of Tuffy and Linda Taylor to rezone Southwind Plaza Ad-

dition from C-2 (neighborhood commercial) to C-1 (commercial) They will also discuss replacement of a copier in the city manager's office. All meetings are open to the public.

### Group sets annual banquet

Pheasants Forever will hold its annual banquet on Friday, Jan. 25, at the Comfort Inn Convention Center in Colby. Social Hour will be 7-7:30 p.m. with the dinner at 7:30 p.m. The auction, drawings and raffles will follow. Paid registrations received by Jan. 18 will be eligible for an early bird drawing for a Pheasants Forever jacket ordered to their size. Membership is \$25.

